

# THE NEPALESE LEGACY IN TIBETAN PAINTING

DAVID P. JACKSON



RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART







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*From the Masterworks of Tibetan Painting Series*

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART  
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## FOUNDER'S STATEMENT

### DONALD RUBIN, CO-FOUNDER RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

THERE IS A BODY OF PAINTINGS that I admire above all others—paintings created for Ngor Monastery by Newari artists and their Tibetan followers in the fifteenth century. These paintings are sometimes referred to as being in the “Ngor style”; however, as David Jackson explains in this volume, they are part of a style of painting called Beri, a Newari-influenced style that can be seen in Tibetan art from the thirteenth through the sixteenth century, often overlapping with other styles but completely dominating all of Tibet from approximately the 1360s to 1450s. Dozens of examples of this art can be viewed and studied on the Himalayan Art Resources website ([www.himalayanart.org](http://www.himalayanart.org)).

Here Jackson gives us tools for identifying Beri-style painting, pointing out the incredible decorative arches and scrollwork, other distinctive decorative aspects, the color palette, and structure. He provides us bountiful historical documentation of the style and comparisons with other Tibetan styles. We begin to appreciate the aesthetic genius and technical mastery evident in many of these paintings, created in the service of Buddhism, easily the equivalent of the Renaissance masterpieces being created in Europe in the service of Christianity.

Jackson's scholarship is thorough and presented in language both persua-

sive and engaging. One my favorite stories he tells in the book concerns a group of Newari artists and a wonderful set of mandala paintings they created. The story goes that the founder of Ngor, Ngorchon Kunga Zangpo (1382-1456), decided to commission a set of Vajravali mandalas – no small task. Somehow six Newari painters, without discussing the matter among themselves, decided to travel from Nepal to Tibet and present themselves to the abbot. Along the way they were offered many opportunities to paint at other locations, places less remote and far richer than Ngor. Yet not one of them wavered from his determination to work at Ngor, drawn to the monastery “as if summoned there by the power of Ngorchon's meditation.”

Jackson goes on to say that later lamas of Ngor interpreted this to mean that the painters had been brought to Ngor almost against their will by the local protective deities.

Whatever compelled these painters to make the journey to Ngor, what is beyond doubt is that the mandalas they painted there are true masterpieces.

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WE SURMISE THAT Buddhist writings and art first entered Tibet from China and Nepal in the seventh century, possibly through the marriages of King Songsten Gampo to a Chinese princess and a Nepalese princess. The spread, mutations, falling away, and rise to complete dominance of Buddhism in Tibet were probably linked to political changes, but the exact cause-and-effect relationships are almost impossible to discern with certainty. Despite the Nepalese and East Asian origins of Buddhism in Tibet, later Tibetans from about the twelfth century looked to India, the original homeland of Buddhism and birthplace of the historical Buddha Śakyamuni for artistic models. Prescriptive Indian Buddhist artistic guidelines of the Pāla-Sena kingdoms dominated Tibet until the late thirteenth century, when Tibet turned instead to Nepal. What caused this shift to new models was the obliteration of Indian Buddhism by the Turks in 1203. With Indian monasteries in ruin and Buddhism wiped out in India, Tibetan artists and patrons began to adopt the Indic artistic conventions practiced in Nepal, and to a much lesser extent China and Kashmir. It was the Newari artists in Nepal whose genius was recognized in Tibet, and it was their techniques and idioms that Tibetan artists adopted and then made their own. Why? It seems because they were nearby and India no longer provided first-hand models.

The Tibetan adaptation of Newari-style artistic conventions came to be known as the Beri style, and it existed in Tibet from the late 1100s until about

1600. This style, which David Jackson so satisfyingly explicates and illustrates in this catalog, was a great flowering of artistic expression that reached one of its high points in the commissions of the abbots of Ngor Monastery in the 1500s. Highly decorative and densely painted, Beri-style thangkas are characterized by ornate scrollwork and elegant decorative arches behind peaceful deities. Those arches often include a vase-based pillar on the sides and fabulous animals such as *hamsa* (geese) and *makaras* (sea creatures) with highly voluted tails. The style also commonly employed vegetal scrollwork as decorative elements to fill, for example, body or head nimbuses or to fill in the background of mandalas. But about 1600 the Beri completely gave way to the Menri style, and to a lesser extent the Khyenri and Gardri. (The story of the origins and later revival of the Gardri is wonderfully told by Jackson in the first book in this series through the life of Situ Panchen [1700–1774]). And those three styles—the Menri, Khyenri, and Gardri—are still practiced in Tibet today.

In addition to his detailed descriptions of what elements make up the Beri style, Jackson provides an analysis of the various structures of Tibetan paintings and how lineage figures are arranged within the structures, enabling us in some cases to name the figures depicted and date the paintings. As he says in chapter 2, “In the portrayal of lineages one usually finds an orderly and exact system at work. Indeed, painted lineages can be read chronologically and thus in-

terpreted as historical records.” With his exacting diagrams and copious examples of paintings, Jackson shows us the various conventions for the starting point of a lineage and then the nine primary conventions of descent. With Jackson as our patient and generous guide, we begin to read the paintings along with him. We learn a new language.

The erudite art historical research and engaging reporting that David Jackson provides in this volume on the Nepalese legacy in Tibetan painting will continue in his ambitious series of books for the Rubin Museum of Art and will eventually take us through all the major and many of the minor artistic styles practiced in Tibet. We have much more to look forward to and much more to learn.







THROUGH THE CARE and skill that they lavished on their sacred paintings, the early artists of Tibet produced many masterworks of great complexity, subtlety, and beauty. When we approach them now, we can easily forget that each of them was just a small ripple in the massive current of Buddhist religious culture that flowed from India to neighboring Asian lands during the first one and a half millennia of our era. Tibetans expressed their spiritual debt to Indian Buddhism during the second spread of Buddhism to their land (from ca. 1050 to 1450 C.E.) by reproducing many models of Indian art. Indeed, for about two centuries (and especially from about 1100 to 1300), the sacred art of the Pāla and Sena kingdoms of northeastern India predominated in Tibet. But in 1203, disaster struck: Turkic raiders destroyed the key monasteries in Pāla-Sena India, wiping out Indian Buddhism. From then on, Tibetans continued to venerate and patronize Indian Buddhist art, but they did so at one remove, without living contact with their original spiritual heartland.

At the crucial moment of Indian Buddhism's destruction, just one traditional center of Buddhist art survived near central Tibet: Nepal. Lying relatively close to the borderlands of western Tsang Province of Tibet, the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal with its Newar Buddhists was home to extraordinarily skillful painters, sculptors, and wood workers. Malla-ruled Nepal, though occasionally attacked by raiders in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,

was never occupied as Bihar and Bengal in India were, and hence Nepal remained for Tibetans a living source of Indic Buddhist art. (Kashmir also survived as a second center of Buddhist art until the mid-fourteenth century, but it lay too far west to be visited from central Tibet, and Kashmiri artists ceased coming to western Tibet in about the middle of the thirteenth century.) Newar painters in the thirteenth century basically followed a local Nepalese adaptation of an Indian style, from which they gradually developed their own distinctive style with its special modes of decoration. Within a generation or two, that Newar style was copied and learned by Tibetans and became the Newar-Tibetan or Beri style (*bal ris* or *bal bris*) of Tibetan painting.<sup>1</sup> From the thirteenth century on, it became their second great India-inspired painting style, and it endured in Tibet for about four centuries, until about 1600.

In the present book, I would like to introduce this august Newar-inspired Tibetan style, sketching its characteristics and briefly surveying a number of examples accessible or known to me. The Beri style at its height (ca. 1360s–1450s) was adopted in Tibet universally for about a century. For us today, it is one of the more easily recognizable Tibetan painting styles, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries artists of Tibet employed it to create some of the most impressive mandala sets ever painted. From the mid-fifteenth century on, abbots of Ngor Monastery, in particular, commissioned a number of outstanding works in this style, leading

some people to call these and similar mandalas “Ngor mandalas.” Yet how many of these Beri-style paintings actually originated from Ngor Monastery or the Sakya School, to which Ngor belonged? Several previous scholars linked Beri paintings almost exclusively with the Sakya religious school and Tsang Province, if not with the monastery of Ngor. One of the main tasks of this catalog and related exhibition is to overcome this false restriction of the Beri style to the Sakya School and to demonstrate the full extent of its chronological development and religious patronage.

This catalog aims at providing a first overview and a historical framework for eventually investigating the Beri style in detail, including the identification of more abbatial commissions of Ngor, both early and late. Several factors have until now blocked a systematic study of those paintings, one of them being the lack of documentation through inscriptions and lineages of the historical masters that are so often depicted on thangkas. To begin filling those lacuna, in the first two chapters of this catalog I introduce the basics of structure in Tibetan painting. In chapter 2, in particular, I explain in detail lineage and structure through various examples. In chapter 3, I introduce the previous studies of the Beri style, and in chapter 4, I investigate some of the misconceptions of previous authors and examine the reputed and actual links of the style with the Sakya School. Chapter 5 describes some of the Beri style's essential stylistic characteristics. In chapter 6,

I sketch the history of the early Newar-inspired painting in Tibet, and in chapter 7, I briefly describe some important mural sites and thangkas painted during the period when the Beri was adopted universally in Tibet. Chapter 8 outlines the Beri style as it manifested at Ngor Monastery, through a number of roughly datable examples. Thus the last three chapters briefly survey the three main periods of the Beri style, including noteworthy murals and a few datable thangkas.

Like the first catalog in the present series, this book primarily investigates Tibetan painting styles. But whereas the first volume introduced a series of styles from within the context of a single Tibetan Buddhist school (the Karma Kagyü), here I survey a single style from a broader perspective, taking into account paintings commissioned in that style by all the main religious traditions. What sets this study apart is that it makes at least provisional use of inscriptions and lineal data for thangkas, where I had access to them. This survey covers more than four centuries. For some thangkas of unknown provenance, my main task was to locate them more accurately in time and place. (I hope to investigate some of the individual paintings and major sets in a later study.)

Many people contributed to this exhibition and catalog. It would not be amiss to thank Don Rubin for encouraging this book, both directly and indirectly, through many years of implacable enthusiasm, and for having the foresight to acquire many of these paintings years

ago. It was he who encouraged me to take on the Beri style as a theme, something I had not delved into deeply before. And to the other collectors and institutions who so generously lent their precious works of art to the exhibition, I must also express my deep gratitude.

I am grateful also to Helen Abbott, for weaving together with admirable skill and aplomb the disparate threads of this book, often under very challenging circumstances. She had assistance from Deanna Lee, Erica Huang, Shayna Keyles, and Lauren Smyth, and Jonathan Kuhr gave helpful advice throughout the editorial process. Margaret Bagwell must be thanked for her time and generosity. Phil Kovacevich brought more than his superb design skills to bear. His keen eye and endless patience made the book and the process of creating it so much better than could have been hoped. Paul G. Hackett prepared the complex and indispensable index. Anandaroop Roy prepared the fine maps.

Karl Debreczeny contributed in many ways, not the least through his valuable comments when observing works of art with me. Martin Brauen and Jeff Watt gave critical suggestions on the manuscript and the related exhibition. Others at the Rubin Museum of Art who supported the project include Vincent Baker, Kavie Barnes, Michelle Bennett, Amy Bzdak, Marilena Christodoulou, Dudu Etzion, Alisha Ferrin, Tracey Friedman, Cate Griffin, Zachary Harper, Jenny Hung, Tim McHenry, Ashley Mask and the Visitor Experience team, John Monaco, Shane Murray, Anne-

Marie Nolin, Andrea Pemberton, Alanna Schindewolf, Brian Schneider, Patrick Sears, Marcos Stafne, Taline Toutounjian, and Eleanor Whitney.

The lenders to the exhibition are listed separately; to them I offer my deepest gratitude. I am also greatly indebted to those who graciously made available photographs of important thangkas or murals, including: Brynn Bruijn, Alain Bordier, Stephen and Sharon Davies, Prof. and Mrs. Mathias Driesch, Prof. Richard Ernst, John and Berthe Ford, Lionel Fournier, Barbara and Walter Frey, Amy Heller, Michael Henss, Himalayan Art Resources, Steven Kossak, Navin Kumar, Thomas Laird, Philip and Marcia Lieberman, Christian Luczanits, Ursula Markus-Gansser, Klaus-Dieter Mathes, Michael McCormick, Moke Mokotoff, Helmut and Heidi Neumann, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Poster, David Pritzker, Thomas Pritzker, Franco Ricca, Hugh Richardson, Ulrich von Schroeder, Sotheby's, Roberto Vitali, and the Zimmerman family, and several who prefer to remain anonymous.

As the first survey of this style, the present book is a provisional report. Its publication deadline did not leave time for much research on individual paintings. Yet I hope that, if nothing else, the gathering of these images here will stimulate others to take a more appreciative look at these venerable and magnificent works of religious art.

David Jackson  
August 30, 2010



## NOTE TO THE READER

TO AVOID REDUNDANCIES in captions to figures, we may assume that all thangkas were painted with distemper on cotton and created in the Tibetan cultural region, unless otherwise specified. When the text refers to HAR (Himalayan Art Resources), the reader is invited to find more information about a work of art at [himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org), using the number given after HAR.

Some terms and names are given in transliterated Tibetan on the first occurrence in the text. These terms will also be found in the index. Diacritical marks are not provided for words of Sanskrit origin if they are familiar to English readers. In the main body of the text, Tibetan proper nouns are rendered phonetically, accompanied by Wylie Romanization on the first occurrence. When appropriate, names quoted from inscriptions or lists of names remain in transliteration. In endnotes, appendices, and footnotes, Tibetan names are Romanized. Some common Sanskrit terms or names with the character *ca* have been spelled as if it were aspirated, i.e., as *cha*: Vairocana = Vairochana















Des études de cette sorte déboucheront sans doute un jour sur une classification des art himâlayens, comparable à celle des autres arts asiatiques. –G. Béguin<sup>2</sup>

ALTHOUGH THE HISTORY of Tibetan art has progressed in recent decades, the study of Tibetan painting remains a difficult task, especially the unraveling of its lesser known early styles. The basic questions of provenance, dating, and iconographic content still cannot be confidently answered for many important individual thangkas of various periods, and those gaps can be especially acute for earlier paintings. In particular, the dating of Newar-style thangkas, including those said to have been commissioned by lamas of Ngor Monastery, has long confounded many experts. In the present book, I hope to lay the groundwork for one day solving some of these conundrums more definitively.

In subsequent chapters, I will briefly survey paintings of the Beri style. Most of the paintings under study were painted by Tibetan artists. Similar paintings may occasionally have been made by Newar artists for Tibetan patrons, and it is rarely possible to tell the two apart. This book is thus not about Newar art per se, though the painting tradition of the Newars (painted in Nepal for Newar patrons) remained in the background as the ultimate origin and, for centuries, a still living source for the Tibetan tradition that it inspired. (See Figure 0.1 for an example of Newar painting for Newar patrons, with the typical depiction of patrons in two boxes in the bottom-right and left corners.) This book thus aims at clarifying *Tibetan* art history, albeit a

strongly Indic and Newar-influenced chapter of that history.

What we, following Tibetan usage, call the Beri or “Newar style” can be thought of as a family of substyles that possessed common ancestors and hence important inherited similarities. Yet with the passing of time (or from greater geographic removes), ever wider divergences can be noted within the clan. Without a continuous series of documented examples from beginning to end of the style’s history, the tenuous familial resemblances can be overlooked and a later phase may seem, at first glance, to be a style in its own right.<sup>3</sup> Such oversights can be minimized by viewing the stylistic family from the widest and chronologically longest possible perspectives.

For the purposes of this study, paintings are considered Tibetan as long as they come from Tibet itself or from bordering areas of traditional Tibetan Buddhist culture. Thus “Tibetan” includes here many regions in the Himalayan borderlands that now belong to modern political Nepal or India, including Ladakh, Spiti, Dolpo, and Mustang. It is pointless to classify, for example, a painting from Dolpo or Mustang as Nepalese, since culturally it is Tibetan.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE DIFFICULTY OF STYLISTIC STUDIES

At the earliest stages of Tibetan art history in the West, stylistic considerations

played a minor role. Just deciphering iconography was an all-consuming job. Even today, with our somewhat better knowledge of iconography and styles, it is still rare for a single style to be taken as a subject for a museum exhibition or catalog.<sup>5</sup>

Stylistic studies are dauntingly complex. Heather Stoddard, for instance, listed more than ten essential topics that they must take into account:<sup>6</sup> “The structure and layout of the painted surface, the palette, the style of the representation of deities and human figures, the motifs, ornamentation and costumes, and also the iconography, the lineage, the donor figure(s) and the inscriptions.” John Huntington, for his part, enumerated seven main difficulties faced by historians of Tibetan styles:<sup>7</sup>

1. The vast geographic range of Tibetan-Buddhist art
2. Huge gaps in current knowledge of the relevant art of many adjoining countries
3. The difficulty of thoroughly comparing subtle decorative elements with the similar elements in the arts of relevant Asian countries
4. The subtle nature of stylistic change in a conservative art that allows little iconographic change and alterations only in subsidiary ornamentation
5. The loss of the work of art’s original context through political upheavals
6. Dauntingly complex iconography
7. The neglect of art history as a discipline in its own right

Detail of Fig. 8.18







## THE STYLISTIC EVOLUTION OF TIBETAN ART

Despite such difficulties, a few experienced specialists have attained a decent grasp of styles. Even beginners, when they view thangkas from a broad standpoint, can easily notice some of the main stylistic developments in Tibetan art history. When we examine a series of datable paintings from the twelfth to twentieth century, for instance, we can hardly overlook tremendous changes in style, from older Indian styles into later, Chinese-influenced ones. This evolution is almost to be expected, given the geographical location of Tibet between the two great civilizations of Asia—India and China—and the fact that historically Tibet received its original Buddhist influences mainly from India.

Though the portrayals of divine bodies have changed little, alterations in the backgrounds and other decorative details are more obvious. One can easily see that the color schemes evolve from the old, mainly red, yellow, and orange coloration, with stylized decorative designs in the background, into a new primarily green and blue palette, with more natural looking backgrounds that include Chinese landscape elements such as stereotyped grass, rocks, trees, and sky. Most Tibetan painters made the stylistic jump from Indic red to Sinic green-blue backgrounds by the early or mid-sixteenth century.

The style of painting employed by Tibetan artists in the early fifteenth century in Tibet had originated in about the late twelfth century from the style practiced by the Newar painters of the



Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. (Some Newar painters actually visited Tibet and worked there in the mid-thirteenth through fifteenth century, as was the case with Fig. 0.2.) This final Indic style before the great leap from red- to green-dominated color schemes was learned and further developed by Tibetans for many generations, and later Tibetan historians knew it as the *Beri*, their name for the Nepalese or Newar style of painting.

### CONTRASTING VAJRADHARAS: TWO TELLING PAIRS

To better appreciate the great stylistic changes from the predominantly red *Beri* to the mainly green and blue *Menri* or *Karma Gardri* styles, it can help to compare paintings with similar main figures, in this case Buddha Vajradhara.<sup>8</sup> Let us begin with Figures 0.3 and 0.4, two paintings that historically and stylistically stand at a very great remove.

FIG. 0.2 (also Fig. 5.16)  
Red Ganapati  
Ca. 1390–1420  
26 ¾ x 23 ¼ in. (68 x 59 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998, fig. 49.

The easiest thing to compare is their backgrounds. The change from a dark, formal, flatly geometric Indian temple-niche-like background to the light, airy, faint blue and green landscape of a late Karma Kagyü painting positively leaps out at us. (Fig. 0.3 portrays Vajradhara as Original Teacher of the Path with the Fruit Instructions, and it will be discussed in more detail in chapter 8 as Fig. 8.4.)

Figures 0.5 and 0.6 provide another sharply contrasting pair. Here I estimate that very little time lapsed between their making, though stylistically the paintings are worlds apart. The first of this

FIG. 0.1  
Chandamaharoshana  
15th century  
32 x 26 ½ in. (81.3 x 67.3 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Perry J. Lewis, 1994, accession no. 1994.452  
HAR 86434





FIG. 0.3  
Vajradhara, Original Teacher  
1429–1456  
34 x 31 in. (86.4 x 78.7 cm)  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Stella  
Kramrisch Collection, accession no. 1994–  
148–634  
Literature: S. Kramrisch 1964, no. 83.

pair (Fig. 0.5) depicts Vajradhara with gurus of the Karma Kagyü in a late Beri style. While red predominates, the background is dark blue, and the arrangement of figures is strictly linear. (The painting is described in more detail below as Fig. 7.39.) It demonstrates that the Karma Kagyü patrons continued to commission some paintings in that style well into the sixteenth century.

Figure 0.6 also portrays Vajradhara with a Kagyü lineage. Though roughly contemporaneous with Figure 0.5, its

Menri style is radically different. Its green and blue landscape in the background alters the color scheme fundamentally. Note also the change in the arrangement of minor figures from strictly linear rows and columns to a more informal arrangement, though here still balanced.

Vajradhara did not appear as a main figure of thangkas until about the mid- or late fourteenth century, and we lack firmly datable examples even for that period. For still earlier stylistic comparisons, one could have chosen one of the more common peaceful deities of the earlier periods, such as a buddha or bodhisattva.

Thus the predominantly red, orange, and dark blue palette and the formal linear layout of the paintings in the Beri are unmistakable, even for beginners. Those characteristics mark it as be-

longing to the earlier, old-fashioned Indian phase when red and orange dominated, and dark blue filled a flat background. This style did not allow landscapes with green grass as decorative elements, whether in the foreground or background.

The positioning of sacred figures also changed slowly but obviously, from a strictly linear arrangement in straight rows and columns to a somewhat more staggered and less formal arrangement of figures in a landscape. The earliest convention was clearly Indian in inspiration, and it persists in paintings of the Pāla and Beri Schools, while the later developments (including right-left alternation of figures beginning at the top-center) reflect in part the penetration of Chinese aesthetic traditions. These changes in color and arrangement jump out at any viewer today, thanks to many centuries of hindsight, but in fact Tibetan Buddhist painting remained deeply conservative and changed at a very slow pace throughout most of its history.

#### FOUR KEY POINTS

To conclude this brief stylistic introduction, I would like to summarize the special features of the Nepal-inspired Beri style. At the risk of oversimplifying, I list just four:

1. The Beri was a classic Indic style, a sister of the Eastern-Indian inspired Pāla-Sena style. When viewed today, both of those Indic styles seem formal and flat (lacking the depth of

FIG. 0.4  
Vajradhara and Half of a Karma Kagyü  
Lineage  
Kham Province  
1800–1900  
31  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 26  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (81 x 67 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 2003, no. 32.











blue-green Chinese-inspired landscapes).

2. The Beri became the universal painting style of Tibet for about a century, from the 1360s to 1450s, following the demise of the Pāla style.
3. The Beri favored elegant decorative arches behind peaceful deities (as seen in Fig. 0.3, but not Fig. 0.5). Those arches often include a vase-based pillar on the sides and fabulous animals with highly voluted tails above (By the sixteenth century, the time of Fig. 0.5, the arches had become optional).
4. The style commonly employed vegetal scrollwork as decorative elements to fill, for example, body or head nimbuses or fields in the background of mandalas.

The complexity of the style's decorative elements—here reduced to just arches and scrollwork—will reveal itself in almost every Beri painting.



FIG. 0.6  
Vajradhara with Short Kagyü Lineage  
1530s–1570s  
Dimensions unknown  
HAR 92014  
Koelz Collection, The University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, no. 17464  
Literature: C. Copeland 1980, no. 111.

FIG. 0.5  
Vajradhara with Gurus of the Karma Kagyü  
1530–1580  
20 x 18 in. (50.80 x 45.72 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.444 (HAR 903)







AMONG THE indispensable tools for studying Tibetan painting styles, one is the interpretation of lineage structure. Style does not exist in a historical or geographical vacuum, and to make sense of it, we must study details of paintings that have been firmly located in a particular place and time. To date a painting reliably, moreover, we need to be able to read its historical contents. For many paintings, that means to see and understand the structure of the *thangka*, and, in particular, any guru lineage that it may portray.

To the uninitiated, many Tibetan Buddhist paintings may seem to embody a chaotic and inexhaustibly variable universe (as Fig. 1.1 may appear to do). But in fact their iconography is limited, orderly, and, above all, hierarchic. To fathom *thangkas* of any style or period, one of the first steps is, therefore, to recognize the hierarchic arrangements of their sacred figures. For understanding the main conventions of precedence and hierarchy, moreover, one must learn to interpret in detail the depictions of guru lineages. Besides their intrinsic religious, iconographic, and aesthetic interest, such depictions of lama lineages can furnish some of the few reliable historical clues for dating a Tibetan painting, which would already be reason enough to study them. Yet despite their importance for a sound understanding of Tibetan art, the basic conventions of lineage portrayal and other compositional elements in *thangka* paintings have seldom been described.

Detail of Fig. 7.10

Lineage structures are not self-evident. Several linguistic or historical hurdles must be cleared if one wants to chart this stately choreography of hierophants. These can be listed as five steps:

1. Correct decipherment of inscriptions recording names
2. Identification and dating of individual masters
3. Identification of the lineage
4. Numbering of members in chronological order (i.e., following the sequence of lineal descent) and
5. Diagraming the position of all figures, following the numbering of step 4

The first Tibetologist to study in any detail *thangkas* depicting lineal gurus was Giuseppe Tucci, who in his scholarly tour de force *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* described three *thangkas* that each portrayed as main figures four lineage masters of the Path with the Fruit instructions of the Sakyapa subschool of Ngor Monastery. He succeeded in (step 1) deciphering the inscriptions and (step 3) identifying the main lineage. He also (step 4) correctly ordered the main figures within each *thangka*, though not as a continuous series within the main lineage.<sup>9</sup>

In the five decades following Tucci's work, most catalogs of Tibetan works of art did not reach his level of work in their analyses of inscribed lineages, though in the 1970s a few scholars began to perform at least step 1 of the documentation. Anne Chayet in two en-

tries of a major exhibition catalog documented the names of two lineages.<sup>10</sup> For painting number 122, she presented the names of lineage masters in their correct order (step 4). Although she did not attempt steps 2, 3, or 5, she demonstrated implicitly an understanding of structure.<sup>11</sup>

Another book of the 1970s to furnish names from inscriptions was a sales catalog of paintings from Ngor Monastery published in Paris in 1978 by the Galerie Robert Burawoy. This book of unusually large format and price documented the names of lineage masters in several paintings, presenting them in white letters on transparent pages overlaying the color plates. Otherwise, the catalog avoided numbers for plates and pages, and it did not sequentially list, date, or identify the lineage masters.<sup>12</sup>

In several catalogs of the 1980s and 1990s, collaborators transcribed some of the inscriptions bearing the names of masters.<sup>13</sup> But they listed and diagramed the names of lineage masters in an ad hoc order, not following the sequence of the lineage. The catalog of G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo (1989) is praiseworthy in that it presented all available inscriptions, but even its lists and diagrams did not conform to the order of the lineages portrayed. Since the early or mid-1990s, several other scholars noticed the potential usefulness of lineage analysis for dating.<sup>14</sup> John Huntington in his contribution of 1990 likewise deserves credit for recording the names of one *thangka* lineage and drawing chronological deductions from the last master he could date. Heather





FIG. 1.1  
White Mahākāla  
Late 17th century  
16 x 11 ¼ in. (40.6 x 28.5 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.29.1 (HAR 351)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 145.

Stoddard (1996) mentioned the structure and layout of the painted surface as the first of eleven essentials when discussing styles, with provenance and dating.<sup>15</sup>

Steven Kossak (1998) in an introduction to a catalog summarized the basic method of lineage analysis: “The length and the specific members of lineages form another clue to the date of a thangka.”<sup>16</sup> He added that the last abbot depicted may be assumed to have been still alive at the time of painting, though in certain cases this was not so.<sup>17</sup> Kossak

proposed a combined art-historical method that was meant to take into account all available data, although led and informed by an investigation and knowledge of styles.<sup>18</sup> For the early members of the corpus presented by Kossak and Jane Casey Singer (dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries), lineages and inscriptions were less significant. But from the thirteenth century onward, they become more and more important to take into account systematically.

Richard Ernst in his article “Arts and Sciences: A Personal Perspective of Tibetan Painting,” briefly summarized the key points of lineage-based dating, which he listed as one among three major tools for reliable dating:<sup>19</sup>

Following the lineage is relatively safe, provided the names of the teachers are indicated and they can be identified based on their physiognomy. Usually, a lineage stops with the donor of the painting and fixes a production date within his active lifetime. Later reproductions of earlier paintings of this kind are so far unknown (except for recent fakes) and contradict the purpose of establishing an unbroken link to the donor.

Here one could also mention inscriptions as a fourth and separate method, since sometimes a brief colophon-like inscription written along the bottom border of the painting names the donor or the lama for whose longevity or in whose memory the painting was commissioned.

In recent major catalogs the documentation of lineages in some entries has improved.<sup>20</sup> Some publications have documented in detail several painted lineages or noted difficulties in interpreting the order of lineal masters.<sup>21</sup> To encourage this trend, I would like to share here the internal rules and outer expressions of structure that I have encountered in my own research.<sup>22</sup>



## PREVIOUS SUMMARIES OF THE PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION

Like lineage analysis, the general principles for placing sacred figures in a Tibetan painting have received relatively little attention. Again we owe the first steps to Tucci, who in *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* devoted chapter 13 to “The Plan of the Tankas,” where he described many key iconographic and decorative elements.<sup>23</sup> He had little to say about composition, besides asserting that thangkas followed a similar general plan, with many shared compositional “characters,” and that the main figure (*gtso bo*) dominated the central space, representing the essence of the painting.

K. M. Gerasimova in a 1978 article, “Compositional Structure in Tibetan Iconography,” stressed the role of the system of sacred proportions (iconometry) of individual figures, but she underestimated the complexity of other elements of structure in iconic (or as she calls them, “representational”) paintings: “The construction of individual figures and decorative-ornamental combinations on a flat surface actually exhausted the entire problem of the organization of space in the representational icon. Its compositional formula consisted in the quantitative establishment of the center and a symmetrical grouping of the secondary components according to a principle of simple transfer.”<sup>24</sup>

Gerasimova described (p. 48f) much more complexity in the structures of biographical or narrative paintings. In reality, even for the usual iconic depictions of peaceful buddhas and bodhisattvas, the subject of composition is more complicated than admitted by either Tucci or Gerasimova. But not hopelessly so.

## A GRAMMATICAL COMPARISON

The nonverbal signs of a Tibetan thangka can be interpreted in ways that



parallel the reading of a written text. A painting of this tradition has its rules of grammar, so to speak, which allow one to interpret its arrangements systematically. As in many written languages, one can distinguish in a painting several levels, such as those corresponding to letters, words, and sentences. To follow that analogy, the sacred figures in a thangka could be considered to be like the words in a language. The individual attributes of a figure—i.e., iconographic elements such as colors, hand gestures, dress, and ornamentation—are parallel to the letters of the words. To determine the correct ordering of the figures, rules exist that govern composition—something like rules of syntax.

## TWO MAIN MEANS FOR ESTABLISHING STRUCTURE

The “syntax” of a Tibetan thangka is not self-evident and will only be recognized

FIG. 1.2  
Four Aspects of Virūpa (upper-left detail of Fig. 7.1)  
Ca. 1330–1360  
33 x 26  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (84 x 67 cm)  
Musée Guimet MA 5195, Fournier Donation  
Literature: G. Béguin 1995, no. 138.

by someone who can identify and classify the individual figures. But how to identify those figures? The two main means are iconography and inscriptions.

The first means, iconography, is adequate for identifying to which class a figure belongs, but it is not very reliable for identifying individuals within the most important class, namely gurus and lamas, because their iconography was sometimes fluid. The same master or adept (*siddha*) may be shown in different postures depending on different contexts. See, for example, Figure 1.2, depicting several forms of Virūpa, corresponding to famous episodes of his life.



Later paintings of the Sakya School show him in four established forms.

Nevertheless, iconographic factors, such as the dress, hair, or hats of the lamas, can be enough for a provisional first identification of a group of figures and possibly of a few of the more famous individuals. Still, doubts often remain, especially for paintings from less common traditions. Here written evidence such as inscriptions are sometimes the only means for a firm identification. Indeed, at the present early stage of research, Tibetan art historians should concentrate as much as possible on paintings with readable inscriptions. Lineages, moreover, should be analyzed with caution and sophistication, especially where the main figure and the last two or three historical figures of a painted lineage cannot be definitely identified.

## TRADITIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS OF BUDDHIST ART

Tibetan painters and learned religious masters were aware of the basic hierarchical rules and chronological conventions expressed in paintings. (My remarks here are based mainly on a direct investigation of paintings, though on a few points—especially regarding iconometrical and iconographic classes—I have been influenced by the explanations of learned lamas and by traditional treatises on arts and crafts.)<sup>25</sup> Such rules were important aspects of the complex and highly developed tradition of religious art that Tibetan Buddhists maintained, as part of their religious inheritance from Indian Buddhism.

In traditional Tibet, art found its highest expression in the service of religion. According to Tibetan “iconological” theories recorded in treatises on sacred art (*bzo rig bstan bcos*), works of Buddhist art were traditionally classified into three main types, each corresponding to an aspect of buddhahood: en-



FIG. 1.3  
Buddha  
12th–13th century  
Metalwork; 6 1/8 in. (15.5 cm)  
Collection of Nyingjei Lam, long-term loan  
to the Rubin Museum of Art  
L2005.9.16 (HAR 68428)

lightened body, speech, or mind. Thus the main types of sacred objects, in ascending order, are the three “supports” (*rten*): bodily supports (*sku rten*), verbal supports (*gsung rten*), and mental supports (*thugs rten*). Figure 1.3 illustrates the first of these three types of holy objects.

Figure 1.4 illustrates a page from an illuminated volume of Mahayana

scriptures, here chosen as an example of a sacred object of the verbal support type (written forms of what were once orally expressed teachings).

Figures 1.5 and 1.6 are examples of sacred objects that are classified as mental supports, namely stupas. (The classification of mental supports, which also include vajras, bells, and mandalas, is a little abstruse, but it cannot be gone into here.)

We can further classify bodily supports according to their spatial extension into two classes: painted (*bris*), i.e., two-dimensional, objects and sculpted or otherwise outwardly extending (*'bur*) three-dimensional objects. Here we will be concerned almost exclusively with



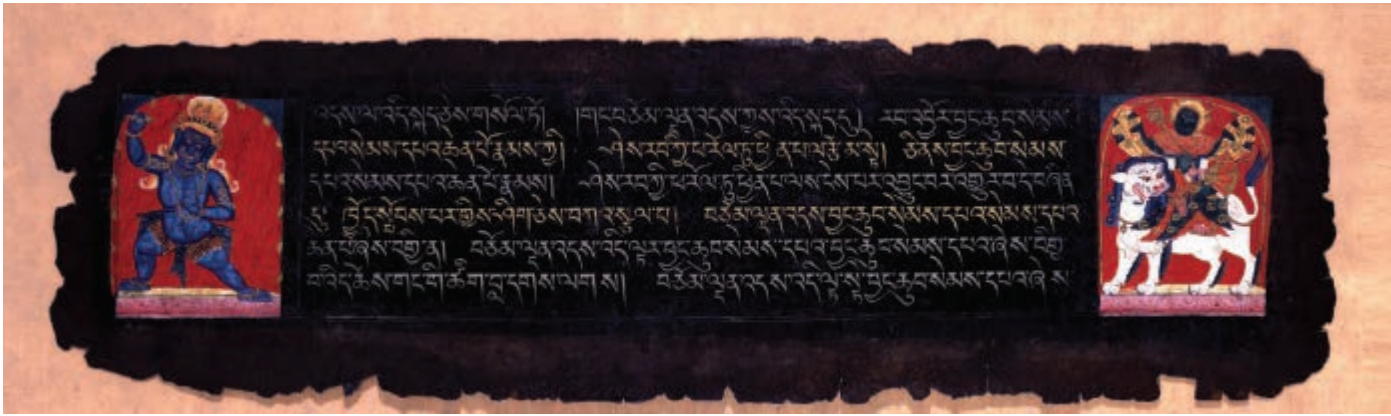


FIG. 1.4  
A Page from a Sacred Manuscript  
Ca. 15th century  
Pigments on paper; 8 x 28 in. (20.32 x 71.12 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.64 (HAR 700115)

bodily supports (*sku rten*) of the first type: painted works of art (*bris sku*), mainly painted scrolls (*thang ka*; *thang sku*; *sku thang*).

### CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO FUNCTION

Painted images can furthermore be classified according to their main function, though this is not a traditional Tibetan classification:

1. Plain iconic representations of a divine figure (See Fig. 1.7.)
2. Narrative paintings, which place the figures within a historical or legendary story, such as a saint's life (See Figs. 1.8 and 1.9.)
3. Didactic paintings, which symbolically represent religious truths (See Fig. 1.10.)
4. Astrological diagrams, which are meant to bring luck and repel bad fortune (See Fig. 1.11.)
5. Representations of offerings, especially offerings made to protective deities in order to gratify and placate them (See Fig. 1.12.)



FIG. 1.5  
Stupa  
At Samye Monastery, Lhoka, Ü Province, Tibet  
Literature: Blanche Christine Olschak et al. 1962.

Of these, the first three are clearly bodily supports, and the last two are special types that were included here for the sake of completeness.

Paintings with guru lineages made up just a small portion of the first class (plain iconic representations of a divine figure), though that proportion was much higher in the thirteenth through fifteenth century. Thus, by no means did all thangkas depict lineages, and portrayals of complete lineages have become increasingly rare in recent centuries.



FIG. 1.6  
Stupa  
14th century  
Metalwork; 27 x 10 ½ x 10 ¼ (65.58 x 26.67 x 26.036 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2003.12.2 (HAR 65213)



## PRINCIPLES DETERMINING THE SIZE AND PLACEMENT OF FIGURES IN A PAINTING

Since Tibetan Buddhist art was and remains a conservative, formal, and orderly world, in which nothing of significance can occur by chance, what were the organizing principles that determined its pictorial compositions? Here, by “composition” I do not mean the layout of such secondary decorative elements as a background landscape, but I do mean specifically the choice and positioning of sacred figures. The main organizing or “syntactic” rules of composition are not complicated, and they can be summed up as four expressions of precedence or hierarchy:

1. Hierarchy of main and minor figures: distinguishing levels of priority
2. Hierarchy of iconographic classes within each priority level (established by 1)
3. Hierarchies within the same class of sacred figures (established by 2)
4. Special exceptions regarding the guru

### 1. The Hierarchy of Main and Minor Figures: Distinguishing Levels of Priority

The first essential distinction of hierarchy is simply to determine which figures are of main importance and which of lesser. Most paintings contain at least the two levels:

- a. Main figure (*gtso bo*)
- b. Minor figures (*'khor*, retinue, or *lharmgron*, literally: guest deities)

Here, for the sake of simplicity, I have limited the minor figures to just one level (b.), although some thangka paintings possess a second, third, or even more levels of lesser figures, i.e., (c.), (d.), and so forth.



A deity becomes a main figure or minor figure in a given painting according to the spiritual or worldly needs of the devotee or patron commissioning the work. (For a lay person, these needs would usually have been translated into iconographic priorities through the advice of a religious preceptor, who would suggest which deities to paint and who might even sketch on paper a simple plan of a painting showing the position of each deity by writing its name where it should stand.) Thus, a figure is chosen

FIG. 1.7  
Buddha Śākyamuni  
15th century  
12 x 7 in. (30.48 x 19.68 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.553 (HAR 1032)





FIG. 1.8  
Moral Tales Following the Tradition of Situ  
Panchen  
19th century  
30 ½ x 22 in. (77.47 x 55.88 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2005.27.2 (HAR 65557)





FIG. 1.9  
 Green Tārā Saving Living Beings from the  
 Eight Perils  
 19th century  
 25.50 x 17.25 in. (64.77 x 43.82 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 F1997.15.1 (HAR 237)  
 Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
 no. 38.





FIG. 1.10  
The Wheel of Existence (*srid pa'i 'khor lo*)  
20th century  
Traditional ink drawing  
After D. Jackson 1984, p. 39.

as the main figure (or group of main figures) of a painting simply by being of importance or useful to the patron or his family. For example, a lama might choose a deity such as White Tārā as the main figure, to ward off a serious illness or other threats to the patron's longevity.

One can immediately recognize and distinguish the members of priority level (a.) and (b.) through differences of size and placement. A main figure is always larger; minor figures are smaller. Furthermore, a single main figure is usually positioned in the middle of the painting on the central vertical axis (Fig. 1.13).

Fig. 1.14a, the first of four drawings illustrating the positions of major and minor figures in a painting, shows a relatively simple and balanced composition with only five minor figures. The second example (Fig. 1.14b) depicts a more complicated one, with eight minor figures on three different iconometric levels. The position of the main figure is self-evident.



FIG. 1.11  
Protective Astrological Talisman Called  
Emaho  
19th century  
20¼ x 15¼ in. (51.44 x 38.74 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.101 (HAR 28)

In the third and fourth examples, the divine figures are placed in the compositions with seventeen (Fig. 1.14c) and thirty-three (Fig. 1.14d) minor figures in all. Both examples again establish the position of the central figures as large ovals in the center and place their increasing numbers of minor figures on two (Fig. 1.14c) or three (Fig. 1.14d) iconometric levels in balanced compositions.

A central figure can also be positioned to the right or left of the central axis (*tshangs thig*), such as in some Chinese-influenced series of arhats or portraits of lineal masters, where the main figure sits in partial profile on a wooden throne or platform within a

landscape. This off-center positioning confused Tucci, who sought a doctrinal or iconographic explanation for it and the “missing” lotus seat, beyond a mere change in aesthetic preference.<sup>26</sup> The solution becomes clear if we take into account the entire set of paintings. The central axis still exists: it is the vertical axis of the main painting in the middle, toward which all the main figures in the





FIG. 1.12  
Representation of Offerings  
18th century  
Pigments on silk  
52 3/4 x 28 in. (134 x 71cm)  
Royal Ontario Museum no. 940x143.3  
(HAR 77594)

thangkas to the right and left turn their faces. Moreover, the central vertical axis of each lateral painting remains the aesthetic central axis around which balance is achieved in that composition, and the main figure of that painting turns his face toward it, too (Fig. 1.15).

An artist has to establish for a painting or set of paintings relatively larger or smaller units of measures for each priority level. The length of the

faces (*zhal tshad*) or palms of the hands (both classical units of measure, each made up of twelve finger-widths, or *sor mo*) are much larger for a main figure than for the minor ones.

In theory, all figures can belong to the priority level of the main figure (a.), and such a painting would have no minor figures. But in actual practice this rarely occurs for paintings having more than two or three figures. In most paintings a main figure (or group of main figures) supplies both a spiritual center of gravity and a welcome aesthetic focus.

## 2. Hierarchy of Iconographic Classes within Each Priority Level

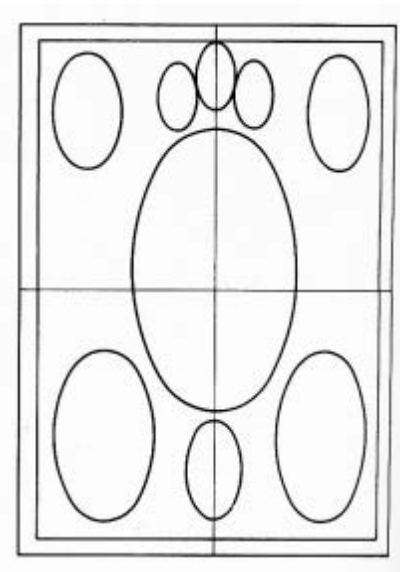
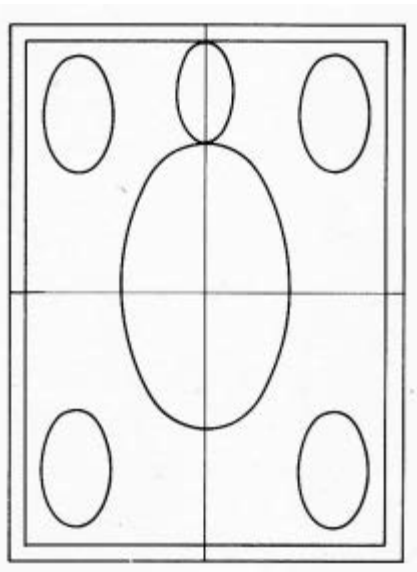
In contrast to the first distinction of main versus minor figures, which in some ways is based on personal and changeable factors, the second main distinction has to do with a more absolutely and permanently established hierarchy, namely the ordering of the different iconographic classes of deities within the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. The sacred figures of the pantheon each belong, in fact, to one or another relatively higher or lower class. The main classes of sacred figures include, in descending hierarchical order:

- a. masters of the lineage
- b. tantric deities (Tib. *yi dam*)
- c. buddhas in Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya forms
- d. bodhisattvas
- e. goddesses (i.e., female bodhisattvas)
- f. *pratyekabuddhas* (self-awakened buddhas); śrāvakas (monk disciples of the Buddha); and *sthaviras* (Elders)
- g. *ḍāka* and *ḍākiṇī* (Tib. *mkha'* 'gro and *mkha'* 'gro ma), i.e., beings of high realization associated with tantric practice
- h. wrathful protectors of the Dharma (*dharmapāla*), e.g., Vajrapāṇi or Mahākāla

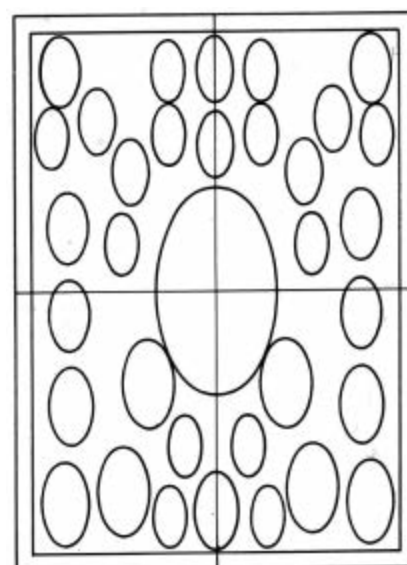
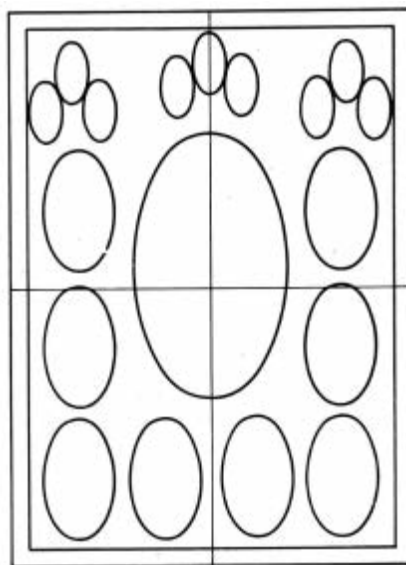




FIG. 1.13  
Longchenpa and Deities  
Kham; early 20th century  
Xylograph  
Dimensions unknown  
Courtesy of Veronika Ronge  
Literature: Jackson 1996, p. 334, fig. 184.



FIGS. 1.14A AND 1.14B  
Two examples of preliminary allocation of space to divine figure through ovals  
Modern redrawing by Robert Beer  
Literature: D. Jackson 1984, p. 48.



FIGS. 1.14C AND 1.14D  
More elaborate examples of preliminary allocation of space  
Modern redrawing by Robert Beer  
Literature: D. Jackson 1984, p. 48.





Fig. 1.15. Subhūti. Xylograph. 18th-century. Monks. From the series of Panchen Lama's lives. After Tucci (1949), fig. 90.

FIG. 1.15

Subhūti from the Series of the Panchen Rinpoche's Previous Lives  
Narthang; 18th century  
Xylograph  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: G. Tucci 1949, fig. 90; and D. Jackson 1996, p. 238, fig. 119.

- i. *yakṣa* deities (Tib. *gnod sbyin*), e.g., the four great kings, guardians of the directions
- j. wealth-bestowing deities (Tib. *nor lha*), e.g., Jambhala
- k. other lesser deities, such as great nagas (*mahānāga*, serpent deities) and keepers of treasures (Tib. *gter bdag*)

This list represents a spiritual hierarchy. The earlier classes embody higher realizations, while the subsequent ones embody relatively lower ones. For example, the realization of a perfectly enlightened buddha is higher than that of a bodhisattva (who is, after all, still a candidate to buddhahood), and both of them are higher than a worldly deity. The tradition does, however, distinguish

between ordinary and great bodhisattvas; great bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteśvara are considered to have reached a buddha-like level of realization, though they do not manifest themselves as an emanation-body (*nirmāṇakāya*) buddha. Another important distinction is between deities who have reached the level of a saint (*'phags pa*) and those who are merely gods of the worldly sphere (*'jig rten pa'i lha*). (Worldly gods are not considered to be worthy objects of refuge and hence are relegated to the lower, worldly fringe in a refuge tree.)

The spiritual hierarchy of the above list is expressed ritually by the order in which such deities are invoked in the ceremonies of Tibetan monasteries. In consonance with Vajrayāna doctrine, the gurus take precedence over all others.

#### *Precedence Shown through Higher Position*

How is this hierarchy expressed in a painting? As before, it is shown through size and placement, though here with some differences. The hierarchy, or spiritual precedence, of one class over another is manifested, first of all, through its vertically higher placement in the painting, relative to the other classes of the same priority level. A good example of the hierarchy of classes is the so-called assembly field (*tshogs zhing*) painting.<sup>27</sup> These assembly fields incorporate all classes of deities in a hierarchic arrangement.

Figures 1.16 and 1.17 both portray relatively recent refuge trees of the Geluk School. In the first, the central figure and main place of refuge is Buddha Śākyamuni. The second portrays master Tsongkhapa as the central figure. Figure 1.16 divides its gurus into three groups: above, tantric gurus (headed by Vajradhara); to the left, the thirty-six Indian and Tibetan masters of the Yogācāra practices of Mahayana

Buddhism (The Lineage of the Vast Conduct, Tib. *rGya chen spyod brgyud*, headed by Maitreya); and to the right, nearly the same number of masters of the Madhyamaka tradition (Lineage of the Profound View, Tib. *Zab mo lta brgyud*, inspired by Mañjuśrī).

#### *Lower Rank through Smaller Proportions*

In addition, a higher or lower status of a class is expressed through larger or smaller physical proportions, but here, again, relative to other classes on the same level of importance. In fact, an exact system of figural proportions exists by which higher ranking classes possess larger proportions than the ones beneath them.<sup>28</sup> The scale of measurements (i.e., the actual length of a “face-length” or “finger-width” unit), however, remains the same within one importance-level.

Usually a painting possesses (as Fig. 1.18) only one main figure (*gtso bo*), and thus the division into classes concerns only the minor figures. But occasionally a thangka contains two, three, or more main figures. (See Figs. 1.19, 1.20 and 1.21.) In those cases, the rules of placement according to class hierarchy operate within those superior groups, too.

Figure 1.18, a portrait of the greatest founder of the Sakya School, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, depicts just a single main figure. It is a classic, somewhat later example of the Beri style, though the painting is not datable except by stylistic comparison. Note such typical features as the pillars, arches, and Newar scrollwork designs (called *pa ṭa ri mo* by Tibetans) in the background.

Figure 1.19 depicts a thangka with two main figures: the Sakya founding masters Jetsün Trakpa (rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1147–1216) and Sakya Pandita (Sa skya Paṇḍita, 1182–1251). A son and grandson of Sachen, respec-





FIG. 1.16  
Geluk Assembly Field with Buddha  
Śākyamuni  
Ca. 19th century  
29 7/8 x 20 1/2 in. (76 x 52 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 2001, no. 12.

tively, one was a long-haired Buddhist lay follower and the other a fully ordained monk. I assume that both appear here as main gurus of the Path with the Fruit (Lam 'bras) instructions. Such depictions of paired lineal gurus were common through the fifteenth century but have long ago ceased to be painted. Note the slightly pointed red pundit hat of Sakya Pandita and the nimbus decorated with raised gold around each main figure's head.

Figure 1.20 depicts a composition with three main figures, here three consecutive early Tibetan gurus from the

lineage of the Sakya Path with the Fruit instruction, the spiritual heart of the Sakya School.<sup>29</sup> The first guru, placed above the other two, is the early Tibetan meditation master Shangtön Chöbar, dressed as a monk. The next is his disciple, Sachen, and the third is Sönam Tsemo, who were both long-haired lay masters. The thangka does not have other datable evidence such as late lineal gurus, but it can be dated on the basis of style to roughly the sixteenth century. Such a depiction of three main figures is very rare, perhaps only attested by this set.

Figure 1.21 depicts a composition with four main figures. The central gurus are four consecutive lineal masters of the Path with the Fruit instructions, starting with Sakya Pandita and his nephew Chögyal Phakpa, and continuing down to Drakphukpa. (All four are clearly monks,



FIG. 1.17  
Geluk Refuge Tree with Tsongkhapa  
Ca. 18th century  
40 x 26 1/2 in. (101.60 x 67.31 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.41.7 (HAR 571)

and only Sakya Pandita wears the special hat of a learned master or pundit.) The painting lacks datable minor figures and inscriptions, but its decorative Newar scrollwork in the red body nimbuses and square format identify it at once as a painting in the Beri style.

### 3. Hierarchies within the Same Class of Sacred Figures

The third basic hierarchical distinction, that which influences the placement of figures within a single iconographic





FIG. 1.18  
 Sachen Kunga Nyingpo  
 15th or 16th century  
 13 ¼ x 9 ¾ in. (33.66 x 24.77 cm)  
 Collection of Shelley and Donald Rubin  
 P2000.4.2 (HAR 944)

FIG. 1.19  
 Jetsün Trakpa Gyaltsen and Sakya Pandita,  
 Surrounded by the Kings of Shambhala  
 Ca. 15th century  
 31 ½ x 27 in. (80.01 x 68.58 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 F1997.45.4 (HAR 580)









FIG. 1.20  
Three Consecutive Gurus of the Path with  
the Fruit Instructions  
16th century  
33  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 21  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (85.73 x 53.98 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.120 (HAR 63)

FIG. 1.21  
Four Gurus of the Path with the Fruit, from  
Sakya Pandita to Drakphukpa  
Ca. late 15th or 16th century  
22  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 18 in. (57.79 x 45.72 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.474 (HAR 935)







class on the same priority level, does not actually pertain in every iconographic class. Sometimes all the figures within a class enjoy the same status, and their ordering within their class is somewhat arbitrary, though members of established groups are often depicted according to an established order, based, for instance, on the sequence of their appearance in a canonical text or famous older painting that functioned as model.

But when a true hierarchy does exist within a class, it may reflect a doctrinal superiority or spiritual seniority. The tantric tutelary deities of the Anuttarayoga Tantras, for instance, are accorded a higher status over those of the Yoga Tantras and the two still lower classes of tantra, in accordance with the doctrinal ranking of New Translation (gSar ma pa) tantras. In the representation of a lineage of teaching masters, by contrast, the order expresses the precedence of relative seniority within that lineage: a spiritually senior figure takes precedence over a junior one. This does not necessarily mean seniority in age (although a chronological succession of older to younger masters is the typical case). Here the decisive factor is spiritual seniority, which is established by one master being the religious teacher of the other.

Artistically, precedence may also be shown for figures on roughly the same vertical level by placing superior figures either closer to the center or to the right hand of their inferiors. Thus, for a pair of masters both shown as main figures, the one to the right relative to the figures (i.e., to the viewer's left) occupies the superior seat. Similarly, within a lineage or series, the position at the first figure's right hand usually takes precedence over that to his left, reflecting ancient Indian conventions for showing respect and, originally, customary uses of the respective hands for cleaner or dirtier tasks.



#### 4. Special Exceptions Regarding the Guru

In a few paintings, the depictions of the patron's personal guru or the great founding masters of his tradition have been pushed to a higher or more central position within their class (i.e., to a position of higher respect), motivated by special devotion to that master. Thus a single guru or a cluster of three founding masters may be moved to the top center, out of their expected position if they had followed a normal linear sequence. (See, for instance, Fig. 1.22, with a single guru at the top, and Fig. 1.23, with a group of three founding lamas moved to a top-central position.)

FIG. 1.22  
Taklungthangpa Chenpo  
Late 13th century  
18 ½ x 14 ½ in. (47 x 37 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
p. 91, no. 18.





FIG. 1.23  
 Disciple of Jigten Sumgön  
 Early 13th century  
 23 ¼ x 18 ⅝ in. (59.1 x 57.2 cm)  
 Pritzker Collection  
 Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
 p. 89, no. 17.





Sometimes the great founding masters have not only been taken out of their normal sequence and moved to a more central position, but they have also been depicted on a larger scale, i.e., on a higher level of importance.<sup>30</sup> An instance of this is Figure 1.24, in which the three early Sakya founders, Sachen and his two most illustrious sons, have been moved to a prominent central position above the two main figures, Gyaltshab Kunga Wangchuk (rGyal tshab Kun dga' dbang phyug) and Gorampa Sönam Sengge (Gorampa bSod nams seng ge).

I also know at least one painting (Fig. 1.25) in which a guru has been elevated to a position within the highest priority level, in fact, to a seat on the crown of the main figure, though this is extremely rare. The guru is here por-

trayed with smaller proportions than the main figure.

Hierarchy thus governs the placement of figures within thangkas. As we have also seen, hierarchic rules operate within three contexts, according to: 1) the immediate spiritual importance of the figures for the patron; 2) the iconographic classes within a given priority level; and 3) the relatively higher or lower position of the individual figure within a given iconographic class. Moreover, the same hierarchical principles apply within single paintings as well as sets of numerous paintings. In the latter case, those principles determine the arrangement of the individual thangkas within the whole set.

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FIG. 1.24 (detail of Fig. 8.11)  
The three early founding masters of Sakya  
above the main figures

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FIG. 1.25  
Vairocana with Attendant Deities and  
Lineage  
Late 12th century  
43 ¾ x 28 ¾ in. (111 x 73 cm)  
Cleveland Museum of Art. Mr. and Mrs.  
William H. Marlatt Fund (1989.104)  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
p. 81, no. 13.











GRANTED THAT hierarchy influences structure, then what does it mean, concretely, to say that the individual figures within an iconographic class are positioned hierarchically? A number of conventions exist for expressing positions of higher and lower precedence in a Tibetan Buddhist painting, and in the course of history quite a few of them were employed. We must make sure we have identified in each case which hierarchic conventions have been used. Here a guru lineage in the painting can be an extremely helpful clue, since it often sets the pattern for the rest of the composition.

In the following pages, I will examine more closely lineages of gurus and the structural conventions for painting them. Learning to recognize these structures will open the eyes of the viewer to much more than iconography: correctly reading the lineages can also unlock many aspects of a painting's origins.

### THE PREEMINENT POSITION AND IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS

Lineal gurus are preeminent in several respects. They form, first of all, the highest iconographic class in Tibetan Buddhism. Even when depicted as minor figures in relation to the immediate spiritual priorities of the patron, they still occupy spatially the highest positions in a painting. Their presence can thus hardly be missed at the top, or at both the top

and right- and left-side columns, of many important old paintings.

### IMPORTANCE OF LINEAGE HISTORIES FOR TIBETAN BUDDHISTS

Throughout most of their history, Tibetan Buddhists have demonstrated a proclivity for depicting guru lineages. The resulting portrayals are important not only as a record of a given lineage's history and the iconographic representation of its masters but also, when the lineage is complete, as clues for dating a painting.

Tibetan Buddhists in other contexts of ritual and practice, too, carefully recorded and transmitted their teaching lineages to the extent they could. For the esoteric Mantrayāna tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism, such lineages were crucial spiritually: the lineal gurus needed to be ritually invoked as a preparatory step in practice. This respect for the lines of gurus contributed to a deep and solid sense of history among many Tibetan Buddhist tantric masters—in contrast to the usual later scholar-monks, or *geshe* (*dge bshes*), whose main training consisted of systematically studying non-tantric doctrines through memorization and debate and who were typically less textual and historical in their orientation.<sup>31</sup>

Because lineages were so important for Tibetan Buddhist practice, individual masters wrote down the particular lineages for Tantric teachings that they

had received from several teachers. The resulting books often consisted of little more than bare lists of masters' names and the titles of books or teachings, yet in Tibetan literature they made up a genre of writing called "record of teachings received" (*thob yig* or *thos yig*).<sup>32</sup> Artistically, Tibetan lamas expressed this same attention to lineages through the careful portrayal of many lineages of gurus. Painted lineages are an artistic expression of the same concern that also finds its expression ritually through the recitation of lineage prayers (Tib. *brgyud 'debs*, short for "prayers petitioning the lineage of gurus," *bla ma'i brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa*).

### CHRONOLOGICAL CONVENTIONS FOR LINEAGES

As with other aspects in the planning of a painting, so, too, in the portrayal of lineages one usually finds an orderly and exact system at work. Indeed, painted lineages can be read chronologically and thus interpreted as historical records. However, for a correct interpretation, one needs to determine in each case which particular convention of chronological descent has actually been used. For this, we can best begin by identifying the starting point. That makes it much easier to follow the continuation of the lineage and thus determine the convention used for depicting the temporal sequence of subsequent figures.

Detail of Fig. 2.23







FIG. 2.1

Vajradhara, the Primordial Buddha  
Nepal; 14th century  
Gilt copper alloy  
18 x 12 x 7.25 in. (45.72 x 30.48 x  
18.41 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2005.16.9 (HAR 65431)

### 1. Conventions Regarding the Starting Point

As expected, lineages usually begin with the earliest teacher. Thus they almost always begin with a buddha, who, for the tantric traditions, is one of the tantric original gurus. For the New Translation (gSar ma pa) Tibetan tantric schools, this primordial teacher is usually Vajradhara (Tib. rDo rje 'chang): a blue-colored buddha in Sambhogakāya form holding a vajra, or ritual scepter, and bell in his crossed hands.

Figure 2.1 depicts a statue of Vajradhara from Nepal. He holds a vajra and bell with hands crossed at his chest. (Such a rich ornamentation through jewelled tiaras, earrings, armlets, etc., is shared with paintings in the Newar and Newar-inspired Tibetan styles.)

For tantras of the Old Translation, or Nyingma (rNying ma), School, the first guru is the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra (Tib. Kun tu bzang po, see Fig. 2.2).

Figure 2.3 illustrates a lineage for a revealed teachings (*gter ma*) tradition of the Nyingma, as opposed to an unbroken standard transmission (*bka' ma*) such as existed for the tantric deity Vajrakīla. In this case, the lineage should go back to Samantabhadra (Kun tu bzang po, the original Buddha), Padmasambhava (the eighth-century Indian master who concealed the teachings), and a Tibetan treasure revealer (who later recovered the teaching at an appropriate time). This painting has twenty-one masters in the lineage, starting with the Buddha Samantabhadra. Careful golden inscriptions name all the buddhas and deities of this



Nyingma tradition but not a single guru.

For non-tantric traditions, the original teacher and starting point is usually the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni (in *nirmāṇakāya* form). The Buddha at the top, left, in Figure 2.4 is Buddha Śākyamuni as first teacher of a Kadampa (Bka' gdams pa) lineage. Figure 2.5 depicts again at the top left Buddha Śākyamuni, but here as the first teacher in the monastic ordination lineage of Ngor.

Where this first guru sits indicates the beginning of the lineage. Several artistic conventions existed for depicting such starting points, but the two most common places to begin were:

- a. The top-left corner (relative to the viewer, which is the top-right corner,

FIG. 2.2

Buddha Samantabhadra with Peaceful and Wrathful Deities  
Ca. 17th century  
33 3/4 x 28 in. (86 x 71.12 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.104 (HAR 36)





FIG. 2.3  
Vajrapāṇi with a Lineage of a Revealed Tradition  
18th century?  
37 x 26 in. (93.98 x 66.04 cm)  
Collection of Shelley and Donald Rubin  
P1996.20.19 (HAR 371)

relative to the deities). This was the oldest convention, and it is well suited to paintings where the figures are arranged in straight rows and columns.

FIG. 2.5 (detail of Fig. 8.21)  
Buddha Śākyamuni as First Teacher from the  
Ngorpa Monastic Ordination Lineage



FIG. 2.4  
Buddha Śākyamuni as First Teacher of a  
Kadampa Lineage  
Mid-15th century  
31 7/8 x 18 3/8 in. (81 x 46.5 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: H. Kreijger 2001, no. 22.

b. The top-central position. This has become, since about the early sixteenth century, the most common convention, though it occurs in some earlier paintings, too. It is suited to figures placed in a more realistic landscape (which, at the top of the painting, includes the sky).

Exceptions do exist, such as the special case where the first figure sits just to the left (relative to the viewer) of the top-central position. Here another figure (the





FIG. 2.6 (detail of Fig. 7.3)  
A Guru Elevated to a Top-central Position

[A]	6	5	4	3	2	1	19	7	8	9	10	11	12
		14	13								15	16	
	17												18

patron's own guru or a great founding master) has for reasons of special respect usurped the top-central position. (See, for instance, guru 19 in Figure 2.6.)

In all paintings of this set, the depiction of the lineage culminates by returning to the top center. The structure of the lineage is shown in diagram [A].

## 2. Conventions of Descent

Let us turn now to some of the main conventions for portraying lineal descent. Once the beginning of the lineage has been located, it is normally not difficult to see how the lineage continues, whether straight across or down columns, or in an alternating fashion. Each starting point had several possible conventions of descent. Here I will describe fourteen ways of depicting lineal descent that I have encountered, grouping them according to starting point or another defining feature.

### a. Descent Starting from the Top Left

i. In the first convention the lineage proceeds straight across the top from left to right. Within this convention, at least five variations show the descent from the original guru at the

top left. Among these, one of the oldest and simplest is to proceed straight across the top row, from the viewer's left to right, as in Figure 2.7, for which the structure is shown in diagram [B].<sup>33</sup> This painting illustrates lineal descent, starting at the top left and continuing straight across from right to left.

This structure works well for short lineages. It can easily accommodate lineages of up to eleven or twelve figures, though in special circumstances it can be stretched to depict even more, especially on the top row of a mandala.<sup>34</sup> Figure 2.8 depicts the upper row of gurus in a mandala of Cakrasamvara with sixty-two deities of the Sakya tradition, now in the Hahn Museum, Korea, which portrays twenty gurus in that row and twenty-three in all. The figures had to be crowded together to fit in, though the final three gurus were placed directly below on the bottom line (Fig. 2.8b). I date the mandala to about 1280 to 1310, based on the fact that the last two gurus were Sakya Pandita and Chögyal Phakpa ('Phags pa).

The greatest number of gurus that I have seen on a top line was

reached in a thangka preserved in the Musée Guimet (Fig. 2.9). It portrays all twenty-three gurus above, again over a mandala of Cakrasamvara with sixty-two deities of the Sakya tradition.

ii. In the second convention the lineage proceeds straight across the top from left to right and then continues in a second horizontal row placed beneath the first. When there are too many figures to be easily depicted in the first row, one solution (though rarely used) was to add another row just below the first. See Figure 2.10, where the three central figures of the second row, however, are deities, and it may be that figures 14 and 15 appear twice. In that case, the dating is to the early fourteenth century. (Otherwise, the last four figures would be numbers 16, 17, 18, and 19, and the dating would be four generations later.) The structure of this painting is shown in [C].

Figure 2.11a depicts a Bönpo thangka in which this structure is carried to an extreme. As Samten G. Karmay has painstakingly documented in his study *The Little Luminous Boy: The Oral Traditions from the Land of Zhangzhung depicted on two Tibetan paintings*,<sup>35</sup> here the series of eighty-six figures continues in eleven consecutive horizontal rows of up to ten figures each, interrupted only by the large central figure, as shown in Figure 2.11b and [D].





FIG. 2.7 (also discussed as Fig. 8.7)  
Mandala of Red Yamari with Lineal Gurus  
1415–1435  
35 x 30 ¼ in. (88.90 x 76.84 cm)  
Collection of Shelley and Donald Rubin  
P2001.18.3 (HAR 1041)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991,  
p. 231, no. 75; and P. Pal 1991, p. 152,  
no. 85.

[B]

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

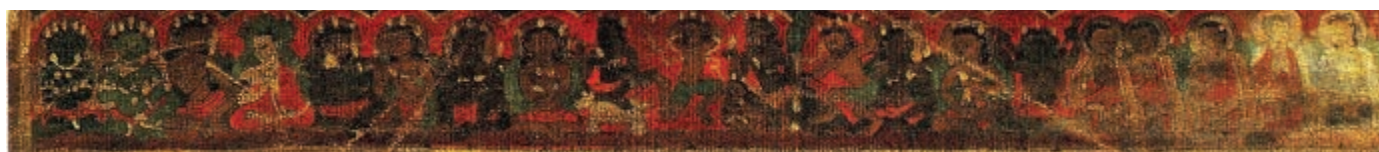


FIG. 2.8A, 2.8B  
Mandala of Cakrasamvara with Sixty-two  
Deities and Lineage  
Ca. 1280–1310  
18 ½ x 15 in. (47 x 38 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 1997, no. 4.





FIG. 2.9  
Mandala of Cakrasamvara with Sixty-two  
Deities and Twenty-three Gurus  
18 ½ x 15 ¾ in. (47 x 40 cm)  
Musée Guimet, Fournier donation, MA  
5188  
Literature: G. Béguin 1990, no. 35.



FIG. 2.10 (detail of Fig. 6.26)  
Lineal Gurus from a Mandala of Hevajra in  
a Sakya Lineage



[C]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	d1	d2	d3	*14?	*15?	16?	17?



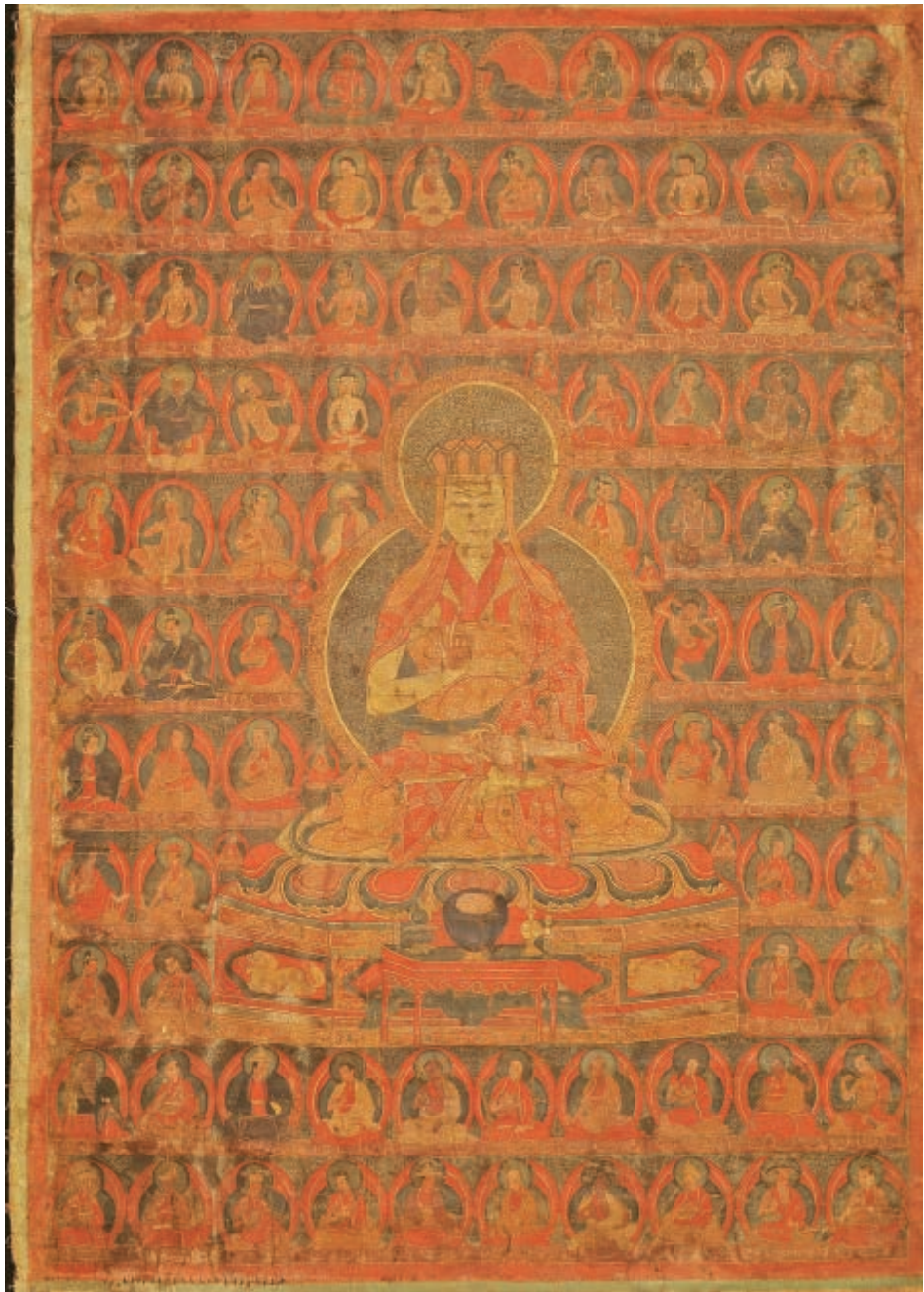


FIG. 2.11A  
 Bon Lama with Lineage  
 Ca. 16th century  
 33 7/8 x 23 5/6 in. (86 x 60 cm)  
 Driesch Collection, Cologne  
 Literature: S. G. Karmay 1998, p. 2,  
 caption 1.

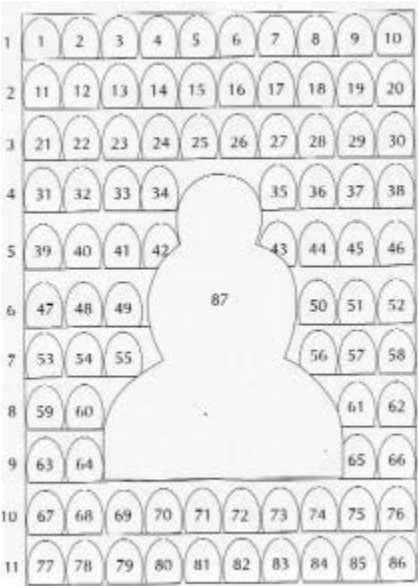


FIG. 2.11B  
 Diagram of Figure 2.11a, from S. G.  
 Karmay 1998, p. 3.

[D]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31	32	33	34			35	36	37	38
	39	40	41	42			43	44	45	46
	47	48	49					50	51	52
	53	54	55					56	57	58
	59	60							61	62
	63	64							65	66
	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76
	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86



iii. In the third convention the lineage proceeds straight across the top from left to right, then down that column. That was another solution for the placement of many masters. An example of this is the painting of the ordination lineage of Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo (Ngorchen Kun dga' bzang po 1382–1456) and his disciple Mûchen in the Davies Collection. (See Fig. 2.12 and diagram [E].)



FIG. 2.12 (also discussed as Fig. 8.9)  
Ngorchen and Mûchen with Ordination  
Lineage  
Mid-15th century  
34 ½ x 31 ½ in. (87.6 x 80 cm)  
Stephen and Sharon Davies Collection  
Literature: P. Pal 1991, no. 87, p. 155.

[E]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
								9
		18a		17		18b		10
								11
								12
								13
			18c		19			14
								15
								16





FIG. 2.13 (also discussed as Fig. 8.12)  
 Cakrasamvara with Sakya Lineage  
 Late 15th century  
 24 x 18 in. (61 x 45.8 cm)  
 Private Collection  
 Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor  
 Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991,  
 p. 221, no. 70.

iv. In the fourth convention the lineage proceeds straight across the top to the right, and then alternates from the left side to the right. This structure is a variation on the same beginning, in which the top row begins on the far left and progresses to the right, before finally alternating between left and right columns. A good example is Figure 2.13, with its diagram [F].

[F]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9							10
	11							12
	13							14
	15, and so on							



v. In the fifth convention the lineage proceeds from left to right but then is interrupted in the middle. This interesting variation of the left-to-right sequence is found in certain old Taklungpa paintings in which the sequence has been interrupted in the middle by a centrally placed figure or figures representing the guru of the main figure (or the three preceding gurus, founders of the tradition). (See Figures 2.14 and 2.15.) In Figure 2.14 a single guru, number 7—Phagmotrupa (1110–1170), shown with a beard—has been moved to a central position over the main figure, number 8, Taklung Thangpa (1142–1210). The beginning of the lineage in both Figures 2.14 and 2.15 is shown in diagram [G].

A variation on that theme occurs when the lineage proceeds left to right but is interrupted by more than one guru in the middle. Figure 2.16 illustrates a painting in which three gurus have been moved to a central position over the main figure. This painting probably dates to the last two decades of the life of its main subject, number 11a, Sanggye Önpö (Sangs rgyas dbon po, 1251–1296). The composition here groups three important gurus—the three founding masters of Taklung—in the top center. The lineal structure is shown in diagram [H].



FIG. 2.14  
Taklung Thangpa with His Lineage,  
Manifestations, and Two Successors  
Last quarter of the 13th century  
18 ½ x 14 ½ in. (47 x 37 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
no. 18; J.C. Singer 1997, p. 55, pl. 37; and  
J.C. Singer 1994, p. 126, pl. 25).

[G]

1 2 3 7 4 5 6





FIG. 2.15  
Taklung Thangpa with His Lineage,  
Manifestations, and Two Successors  
Late 13th century  
10 7⁄8 x 7 7⁄8 in. (27.5 x 20.7 cm)  
Alain Bordier Foundation (AB 36)



FIG. 2.16  
Sanggye Önpö with Lineage  
Late 13th century  
15 3⁄8 x 12 1⁄8 in. (39 x 31 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: J.C. Singer 1997, p. 59, plate 41.

[H]	1	2	3	9	8	10	4	5	6
	11b	-s2-						-s3-	7
11a									



b. Descent Starting from the Top Center

vi. The sixth convention has the lineage beginning at the top center and proceeding across the top to the left and down the left side column, then back to the top center, across the top to the right, and down the right column.

Figure 2.17 exemplifies this rare arrangement, shown in diagram [I]. Its lineage begins with Vajradhara at the top middle, progresses three figures to the viewer’s left, and then drops down the left column. Then it returns to numbers 10 and 11, the first lay adherent and pundit in the top row—Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen (rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan 1147–1216) and Sakya Pandita (Sa skya Paṇḍita, 1182–1251)—goes right, and finally descends down the right column.

Note that the iconography of guru number 10, Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen, actually corresponds to the usual later depictions of his father, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sa chen Kun dga’ snying po, 1092–1158), who here should be in position 8. Could we have Sachen here in an anomalous position (10), owing to the great veneration paid him by the tradition? Or is Sachen in position 8, and is this just a more fluid iconography for those two lamas?



FIG. 2.17  
Mahākāla Pañjaranātha with Lineage  
Mid-15th century  
63 ½ x 53 ½ in. (161.6 x 136 cm)  
Zimmerman Family Collection  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991,  
p. 222, no. 71.

[I]	4	3	2	1	10	11	12	13
	5							14
	6							15
	7							16
	8							17
	9							18





FIG. 2.18  
Red Yamāri with Lineage  
15th century  
32 3/8 x 28 1/4 in. (82.4 x 71.7 cm)  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Gift of John  
Goelet, 1967, acc. no. 67.829 )  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991,  
p. 234, no. 77; and P. Pal and Hsien-ch'i  
Tseng 1969, no. 36.

[J]	6	5	4	3	2	1	7	8	9	10	11
	12?	14?								15?	13?

[K]	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
				15							17			
			16									18	19	
	20													
	P(21?)													

vii. In the seventh convention the line-  
age proceeds from the center across  
to the left, then across to the right,  
and continues below. An example of  
this structure is Figure 2.18. Its line-  
age begins as shown in diagram [J].  
Another example of a central  
beginning that goes to the left is  
Figure 2.19, which depicts a lineage  
of about twenty gurus. Its structure is  
shown in diagram [K].

The lineage ends two genera-  
tions after Drakpa Gyaltsen (the last  
white-robed lay master), i.e., to the  
right of Vajradhara.<sup>36</sup> If the lineage is  
complete, then the patron (P) would  
have been a disciple of Chögyal  
Phakpa or one of his contemporaries.  
The center line of this balanced com-  
position lies between gurus number  
1 and 8. Rob Linrothe in a catalog  
entry correctly noted the problem of  
the unusual lineage order and sug-  
gested three possible solutions.<sup>37</sup> The  
upper row of lineal gurus has seven  
masters to both the right and left,  
making an unusual even-numbered  
total of fourteen.

FIG. 2.19  
Twelve-Handed Cakrasamvara Mandala  
with Lineage  
26 1/2 x 22 in. (67.3 x 55.9 cm)  
Shelley and Donald Rubin Collection  
HAR 97  
Literature: R. Linrothe and J. Watt eds.  
2004, catalog no. 42.









FIG. 2.20  
Taklung Thangpa, His Lineage and  
Manifestations  
Early 13th century  
12  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 9  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (32 x 25 cm)  
Courtesy of the Michael J. and Beata  
McCormick Collection  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1996,  
plate 203 (84a).

viii. In the eighth convention the lineage proceeds from the center across to the left, then across to the right, and finally returns to the top center.

In Figure 2.20 the lineage jumps to the top center before descending to guru number 8, the main figure, Taklung Thangpa. Here the top center has been reserved for the guru of the founder. Its structure is shown in diagram [L].

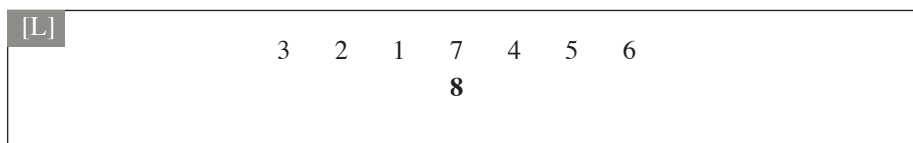






Figure 2.21 illustrates a further development of that structure. The lineage begins just to the left of the top center. It goes left and drops down the left column one figure, then returns to just right of the top center. From there it skips over Buddha Śākyamuni and goes to the right edge, descending down the right column one figure. Then it jumps back to the guru (including a cluster of lesser figures around the guru) at the top center, before descending to the main figure. The top center is reserved for the guru of the main figure. Its structure is shown in diagram [M].

FIG. 2.21  
Sanggye Yarjön with Lineage  
Late 13th century  
19 ¾ x 15 in. (50 x 38 cm)  
Musée Guimet 6083  
Literature: G. Béguin 1995, p. 482, ad-  
denda.

[M]	4	3	2	1	10	B	6	7	8
	5								9





FIG. 2.22  
Shangtön Chökyi Lama, Abbot of Narthang  
Ca. late 13th century  
51 1/8 x 44 7/8 in. (129.7 x 114 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: J.C. Singer 1997, plate 46; and  
1994, plate 24.  
© Hughes Dubois Paris-Brussels

[N]	5	3	1	2	4	6
	7					8
	9					10
	11		15?			12
	13					14
	16					17
	d1					P (18?)

ix. In the ninth convention the lineage begins in the center, but it then alternates to the left and right, all the way down both sides. This has been the most widespread convention since the sixteenth century, and it has practically replaced all other conventions. Anne Chayet mentioned the arrangement of beginning at the top center and alternating to both sides as a usual later convention. This convention is said to have been introduced in the Sakya School by Thekchen Chöje Kunga Tashi (Theg chen chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis, 1349–1425).<sup>38</sup> That master did visit the Ming court in the first decade of the fifteenth century and brought back to Tibet much Chinese Buddhist art, which was later admired and in some cases taken as models. Though this convention thus may have become more widespread in the art of the Sakya School in Tibet from the time of Thekchen Chöje, Figure 2.22 is an example of it in a much earlier Kadampa painting, and I have seen it in other Kadampa works that predate Thekchen Chöje.

Figure 2.22 depicts a very large thangka, previously dated to about 1250; it is not a standard Taklung painting, though the style is in some respects similar. Its main figure is an abbot of Narthang (Snar thang), the important Kadampa establishment in Tsang (gTsang) Province. The convention for depicting descent here is shown in diagram [N].

The lineage begins just to the left of center, and then descends alternating to the left and right. The present thangka is a very early instance of this convention. This is a Kadampa lineage, and one can identify number 7, Atiśa, and number 8, Dromtön, on the basis of their iconography. The continuation seems to represent the Narthang abbatial lineage as recorded by Gö Lotsawa (\*Gos Lo tsā ba) in his *Blue Annals*.<sup>39</sup>



9. Potowa (Po to ba)
10. Sharawa (Shar ba pa)
11. Tummo Lotrö Drakpa (gTum mo Blo gros grags pa, at Narthang 1153–1166?)
12. Dotön Sherab Drak (rDo ston Shes rab grags, at Narthang about 1166–1185?)
13. Shangtsun Dorje Ö (Zhang btsun Rdo rje ‘od, at Narthang about 1185–1192?)
14. Drotön Dutsi Drak (Gro ston Bdud rtsi grags, at Narthang about 1192–1230?)
15. Shangtön Chökyi Lama (at Narthang about 1230–1239?)

I am not sure why two of the last masters shown (numbers 16 and 17), seemingly a continuation of the lineage, are depicted at a much smaller scale. I assume they were disciples or successors of Shangtön (Zhang ston), but I cannot prove it. If they are also to be counted as teachers of the lineage, then the main figure could be two generations later, i.e., number 17 and not number 15.

One of Sanggye Önpö’s teachers was a certain “Geshe Shangtön” (Dge bshes Zhang ston), whose title *geshe* identifies him as probably a member of the Kadampa tradition. Geshe Shangtön was present in Taklung in 1272, directing the planning of the large funeral stupa for the relics of Sanggye Yarjön (Sangs rgyas yar byon) built by Sanggye Önpö before the latter departed for Kham (Khams) Province and Riwoche.<sup>40</sup> Thus we cannot be blamed for wondering whether this Geshe Shangtön might not be the Shangtön Chökyi Lama of the thangka.

A much later illustration of the same arrangement is Figure 2.23, which portrays the adept (*siddha*) Damarupa as master of the Path with the Fruit, with a surrounding lineage.<sup>41</sup>

Here the sequence of minor figures is: 1. top center, 2. *his* right hand, 3. *his* left, and so on. Thus the structure of the



top row and the next few lines is shown in diagram [O].

### c. Five Further Variations

The above nine types probably cover the vast majority of existing thangkas. But they do not exhaust all possibilities. We should keep our eyes open for further variations that express the same basic principles. The following five thangkas,

FIG. 2.23  
The Adept Damarupa as Master of the Path with the Fruit with Lineage  
Late 16th century  
29 3⁄8 x 24 3⁄4 in. (74.5 x 62.8 cm)  
Michael Henss Collection, Zurich  
Literature: P. Pal et al. 2003, no. 174.

[O]	8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9
	10	12						13	11
	14								15
	16								17
	18								19
	20								21
	22 etc.								





FIG. 2.24  
Taklung or Riwoche Abbot and His Lineage  
Mid-16th century  
14 ½ x 12 ¼ in. (37 x 31 cm)  
Collection R. R. E.  
Literature: A. Heller 1999, no. 104.

[P]	3	2	1	7	4	5	6
				8			

for instance, when examined in detail could each be seen to embody somewhat different structures.

x. One of them, our tenth convention, was to show the lineage beginning as near as possible to the middle and alternating left to right but interrupted by the guru of the main figure in the middle. Figure 2.24 portrays a great Taklung Kagyü lama, presumably painted at Riwoche Monastery in western Kham Province. Its lineal gurus on the top line are easy to recognize from their iconography, but their ordering is unusual, as seen in the diagram [P]. (The order of the remaining masters awaits study.)

Here the planner of the thangka has placed both Vajradhara and the guru of the central figure as near as possible to the middle of the top row, though Vajradhara had to be moved one position to the left to make room for the lama, who is shown sitting directly on the central axis. I read the structure as indicating that the main central figure, number 9, was Taklungthangpa, the disciple of the lama who had been moved to the center: guru number 8, Phakmotrupa. (Though the painting dates to the late sixteenth century, it unexpectedly contains prominent Pāla stylistic elements that otherwise had disappeared from normal usage in the mid- or late fourteenth century. But it is not an exact replica of the old Pāla [or post-Pāla] Tibetan painting style, nor did it employ the traditional Pāla yellow borders with alternating red and blue tiny petals or jewels around the outer borders but, instead, thin yellow or gold lines and wider red edges.)

The painting possesses a detailed inscription on the back, and the names of many masters are written in gold on the front, beneath each figure. I assume that the larger figure at the middle of the bottom row is



Jigten Wangchuk of Riwoche (1454–1532), and the figure to his left, an abbot two generations later, Tshokye Dorje (mTsho skyes rdo rje, b. 1530),<sup>42</sup> though more definitive conclusions can be drawn only from a more complete documentation of the inscriptions.

xi. An eleventh convention omits any buddhas in the top row, and then the lineage begins alternating from left to right, concluding in the middle with three figures. Figure 2.25 illustrates a possibly mistaken structural peculiarity. Its top row lacks buddhas but features, instead, six tutelary deities: d1–d6. Then the lineage alternates from left to right, concluding in the middle with three figures, as shown in diagram [Q].



FIG. 2.25  
Two Kagyü Patriarchs  
14th century  
18 1⁄8 x 14 1⁄8 in. (46 x 36 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 1997, no. 39.

[Q]	d1	d2	d3	d4	d5	d6	d7
	1						2
	3			13			4
	5		14		15		6
	7						8
	9						10
	11						12







xiii. A thirteenth convention was to arrange the lineal gurus concentrically around a central deity. Figure 2.27 exemplifies this concentric arrangement, which positions the lineage masters in semicircles to the right and left of the central deity, Hevajra (H), as seen in the diagram [S].

The last lineal lama (number 19) of this black thangka lived seven generations after Phakpa Lodrö Gyaltshen (‘Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1235–1280), i.e., he brings the lineage down to about Ngorchen’s time (about mid-fifteenth century). But the style is several generations later, and I suppose that the lineage is incomplete.



FIG. 2.27  
Hevajra with Lineage  
Ca. 16th century  
27 ½ x 20 in. (70 x 51 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: H. Kreijger 2001, no. 56.

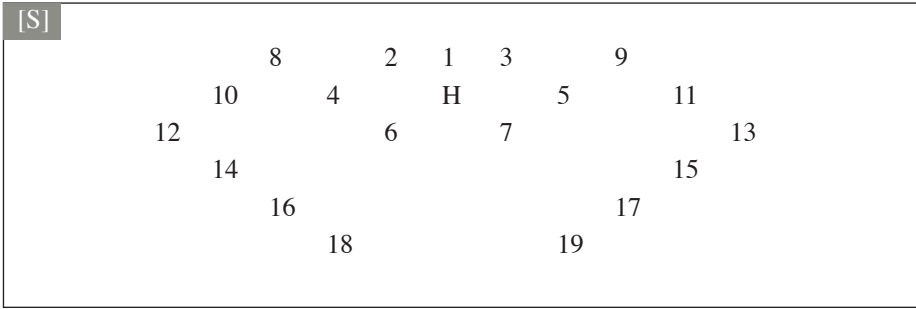




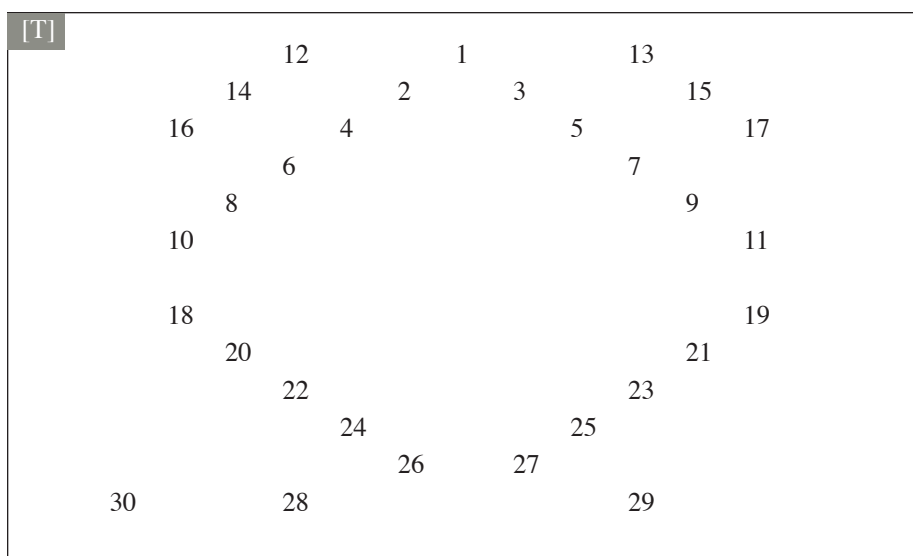


FIG. 2.28  
The Mandala of Vajravidāraṇa with Lineage  
Mid- or late 16th century  
19 ¾ x 14 ¾ in. (50 x 36.5 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: H. Kreijger 2001, no. 66.

xiv. A fourteenth convention was to arrange the gurus again concentrically but here around a mandala. Figure 2.28 embodies this second concentric structure. Here the center is the mandala of the deity Vajravidāraṇa (rDo rje rnam ‘joms), diagrammed in [T]. Guru number 24 in the lineage is Ngorchen. Number 30 is the final guru of the lineage, and not (as one might otherwise expect) the commissioning patron. He is the Ngor abbot “Buddhasimha,” i.e., Sanggye Sengge (Sangs rgyas seng ge, 1504–1569), eleventh abbot of Ngor, whose tenure as abbot was 1557–1569. He sits prominently in the corner, seemingly as guru of the patron. The final generations leading up to him are:

24. Ānanda (Ngorchen Kun dga’ bzang po)
25. Kīrti (Guge Paṇchen Drakpa Gyaltshe)
26. Legs pa’i ‘byung gnas (i.e., Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub, 1456–1532)
27. Kunga Sönam (Sa lo ‘Jam dbyangs Kun dga’ bsod nams)
28. Kunga Legdrup (Kun dga’ legs grub or lhun grub)
29. Yeshe Gyaltshe (Ye shes rgyal mtshan)

Portrayed is Vajravidāraṇa in the tradition of Jayavarma and Jñānaśrī, with a nineteen-deity mandala for its initiation.<sup>43</sup>





## THE CHRONOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LATEST FIGURE

A dearth of datable thangkas has long plagued historians of Tibetan painting. By comparing stylistic elements, we can often reach a provisional dating to within two or three generations. But many paintings contain additional evidence that can and should be used for a more exact dating, such as written inscriptions that identify individual lineal gurus and sometimes even name the lama who performed the consecration or the commissioning patron.

Even without inscriptions, the presence of an identifiable guru lineage often makes possible a more exact dating. If the lineage is complete and has been properly interpreted, the identity of its last figure enables an approximate dating of the patron to within about one generation. This may sound inexact, but being based on internal evidence relating to identifiable historical people, the method has several advantages over the more hypothetical conclusions obtained through mere stylistic similarity. (It will be possible in some paintings to test the accuracy of dating by lineage—and to confirm whether the patron belonged to the generation after the last guru of the lineage—namely in those thangkas that possess both an inscribed lineage and inscriptions mentioning the name of the patron and the occasion for his commissioning the painting.)

## SHORT AND INCOMPLETE LINEAGES

When studying lineages, we must always bear in mind the possibility that a given lineage may not be complete. Hence, paintings should not be dated mechanically to the time of the last lineage master portrayed.

For instance, Figure 2.29, a painting of Mahākāla with a lineage, pos-



sesses a short lineage, too short to allow it to be dated by its style to the time of the last master portrayed. The unusual style of the painting was noted by Pratapaditya Pal 1984, p. 66, who said it was “in many ways a unique thangka for it introduces deviations not generally encountered in others of the same style. In no other Mahākāla thangka is the god’s lotus placed on a base formed of stylized rocks which are variations of the typically Nepali formula for rocks.” Again Pal admired the skill of its painter, praising him as “aware of various styles and a great synthesizer.”<sup>44</sup> (In my third cata-

FIG. 2.29  
Mahākāla Pañjaranātha with Lineage  
15th century  
23  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 17  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (59.9 x 44.5 cm)  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Poster Collection  
Literature: P. Pal, “The Lord of the Tent in Tibetan Paintings,” *Pantheon* Vol. XXXV, (April, May, June, 1977) col. pl. and cover; P. Pal 1984, no. 28; and P. Pal et al. 2003, no. 160.

log in this series, I intend to investigate further more instances of perplexing and misleading lineages.)

Figure 2.30 depicts another probably incomplete lineage, but here it is not



the final generations that are missing. The painting portrays a mandala of Hevajra with a lineage, one of four or seven lineages of that deity that were transmitted by the Sakya School. But where is Vajradhara? The lineage as portrayed here is surely incomplete at the beginning, since it begins with a series of Tibetan lamas. Neither Indian great adepts nor Sachen and his sons are anywhere to be seen.

This painting thus may belong to a set of small mandalas in which the lineages were divided among two or more paintings. If the three offering goddesses below (g1–g3) are three of the eight offering goddesses, this could indicate that the lineage (like the goddesses) was divided among three thangkas. If all three paintings depict eleven gurus each, then a total of thirty-three lineal masters would appear in this three-thangka group. This would yield the hypothetical ordering shown in diagram [U]. Evidently the lineage starts in the top-left corner, and so I have begun the hypothetical continuation there. The painter has left incidental decorative elements to a minimum; for instance, the background of the mandala is a plain blue field filled with infinitely repeating decorative roundels of scrollwork, and nothing else. But since the lineage is incomplete and the lamas lack inscriptions, little more can be said historically or iconographically until other paintings from its original set are investigated.

Incomplete lineages are just one possible difficulty. We must also not forget that one or two lamas as the main central figure or figures may represent the final figures of the lineage, thus bringing the lineage forward another

generation or two. We must also try to identify and date as many figures from the end of the lineage as possible, for despite the other complications of this method, one thing is sure: a painting cannot have been painted before the latest historical figure that it portrays.

Most historians of Tibetan art would now agree that a description of inscribed lineages is essential for documenting in detail the paintings that contain them. Ideally, the documentation should include all five steps:

1. Deciphering the names
2. Identifying and dating individual masters
3. Identification of the entire lineage
4. Listing the names following the chronological order of the lineage
5. Diagraming the relative positions of each figure, with numbers corresponding to the list of step 4

For structural analysis, the job is not finished until step 5 is complete. In this chapter, I have concentrated on showing as many instances of that last step as possible but did not furnish every step leading up to it.

### HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF PAINTED LINEAGES

Generally speaking, the painted depictions of lineages in carefully executed thangkas are an accurate representation of contemporary knowledge or opinion about the particular lineages. Especially for the most recent generations they portray, they can be trusted as a fairly reliable historical record, as can sometimes be confirmed by checking the parallel

written sources. In many cases the lamas planning the painting must have based their series of lineal gurus on the best available written sources. Sometimes an inscribed painted lineage can serve nowadays as a rare record of an otherwise unattested transmission.

The above comments about historical accuracy, however, mainly refer to the Tibetan portions of lineages. It is possible, especially in very long Indian lineages, that the early Indian segments embody semi-legendary or even legendary materials of limited historical value. Still, one should investigate carefully at least the first few and last few Indian generations and should not dismiss out of hand all references to Indian masters.

### CONCLUSIONS

Depictions of lineages are a valuable key for students of Tibetan art. They can help unlock the overall structure and thus historical content of many paintings. If accurately interpreted, lineages can improve our understanding of art history, iconography, and even the religious culture of Tibet in general.

Paintings of guru lineages bear witness to what seems to be a special feature of Tibetan (especially Tantric) Buddhism and even Tibetan culture in general: a strong sense of concrete tradition and history. The fastidious care paid by generation after generation of Tibetans to recording actual lineages in art as well as in ritual practice and similar written lineage records is, as far as I can judge, distinctive within the Asian Buddhist cultural realm. Though rooted in Indian concepts of the guru lineage, these Tibetan expressions of lineage have few close parallels known to me elsewhere in the world. Given the importance of painted lineages in these and other respects, one can only hope that historians of Tibetan art will devote to them the care they deserve.

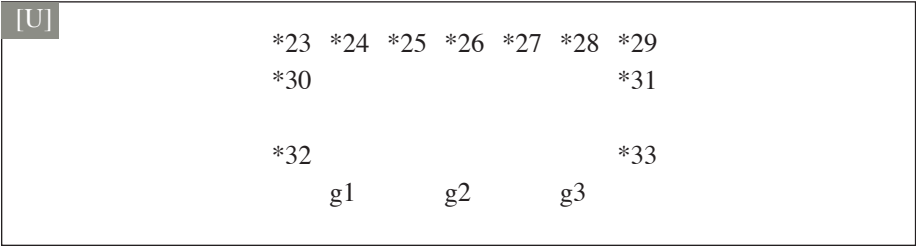






FIG. 2.30  
Hevajra Mandala with Lineage  
Ca. 16th century  
14 ½ x 11 ½ (36.8 x 29.2 cm)  
Shelley and Donald Rubin Collection  
HAR 964  
Literature: R. Linrothe and J. Watt eds.  
2004, no. 44.







THE EARLIEST Western scholars to notice the existence of the Beri style stressed the long-standing artistic connection that once existed between Tibet and Nepal. The first, George N. Roerich, asserted in his book *Tibetan Paintings*, which was published from Paris in 1925, that early twentieth-century painters of Shigatse in Tsang were still “a tributary to the Indo-Nepalese art.”<sup>45</sup> It was left to later scholars to try to define more precisely the extent and duration of Newar influence.

#### GIUSEPPE TUCCI 1949

The father of Tibetan art history, Giuseppe Tucci was the first to survey, in his monumental three-volume study *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (1949), the artistic history of Tibet, though he mainly referred to the monuments of Tsang Province that he personally knew. Discussing the origins of Tibetan painting, p. 271, he wrote:

But whence did the Tibetans receive their first lessons of art, in our case, of painting? Which was the school they came in contact with first, and set out to imitate? It has been generally stated that Tibetan painting is derived from Bengal, through Nepal. This opinion rests on the authority of a native tradition, rather recent as to its literary formulation, but in fact derived from ancient memories,

transmitted from that succession of oral teachings, from master to disciple, which defies the silence of centuries.

Holding (p. 280) that “the development of Tibetan painting consists in a mutual approach and blending of Chinese and Nepalese manners,” Tucci also believed that the early fifteenth-century murals of the great stupa of Gyantse (rGyal rtse) represented the most significant monument of Tibetan art, “now born into an individuality of its own.” “There is a little of each, more India than China, but both seen for the first time through Tibetan eyes.”

While Tucci’s summary of basic trends was correct, his chronology of styles was inaccurate, dating one of the main stylistic revolutions centuries too late. He also (p. 277) overstated the extent and duration of Nepalese artistic influence on Tibet:

Contacts with Nepal were never interrupted, both on account of the frequency of trade and neighborhood, and also because, between Tibet and Nepal, there was a continual exchange of persons and things, finally because Nepal remained for a long time a place where Tibetans went to study Sanskrit.

And (p. 278):

Thus the Nepalese manner was continually kept alive by an unbro-

ken flow of artists, paintings or statues ordered by commission to the Buddhist community in Nepal, by the study of its models, existing in great numbers in public and private chapels, by the inspiration Tibetans could find in the miniatures of manuscripts.

Tucci (p. 278) thus believed:

Before China, in the XVIIIth century, renewed Tibet’s pictorial traditions through the triumph of the Dalai Lamate and then through political submission, ruling from the great monasteries of Lhasa and Tashilhunpo or irradiating from the Eastern provinces, Nepalese art and crafts held undisputed sway.

Subsequent research has shown that the Beri actually lost its predominance not in the eighteenth century but two centuries earlier, and that by the first half of the sixteenth century it no longer dominated central Tibet. Where the style retained a later foothold (for example, at Ngor, in Guge, or among Karma Kagyü patrons), it did so as a minor and gradually disappearing style. By the early seventeenth century, it had virtually died out.

Tucci, like G. N. Roerich or A. H. Francke two decades before him, was not familiar with the traditional terminology for Tibetan painting styles. Perhaps he had not noticed any of the more extensive relevant passages in his readings. If he had been aware of the

Detail of Fig. 3.6



other more extensive traditional discussions, such as in the astrological polemic *Vai durya g.ya' sel* of the seventeenth-century scholar regent Desi Sanggye Gyatsho (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho), he probably would have made use of them.<sup>46</sup> When he did adopt a stylistic terminology, he did so in an eclectic way, based variously on foreign countries and Tibetan provinces and religious schools. In volume II, part 3, he grouped the paintings under the following somewhat confusing rubrics: Nepalese schools, Guge school, Composite style (I. Sa skya pa and rNying ma pa, and II. Other schools), the great Tibetan monasteries of the Yellow sect, Tibetan “Settecento [eighteenth century]” various schools, Khams style, and Central Asian style.<sup>47</sup>

As part of his documentation of the historical, cultural, and religious background of Tibetan paintings, Tucci described (p. 157) a biography of Ngorchen among his historical sources, calling him the founder of both the monastery and a sect that took its name from it, though doubting whether the trifling doctrinal differences between Ngor and Sakya justified classifying the Ngor sub-school as a separate sect. Elsewhere he devoted a few lines to Ngor Monastery, which he had personally visited:<sup>48</sup>

We know the date of Ngor’s foundation. It is not one of the most ancient in gTsang, but thanks to its abbots, who were learned masters of esoteric scriptures, it gathered a rich collection of Sanskrit manuscripts and of ancient objects of art [he refers here to his Figures 85 and 86]. Some of its chapels are real art galleries, in which may be admired magnificent examples of Indian sculpture, and no small number of Pāla images.

In the catalog section of his book, Tucci described several paintings from



FIG. 3.1  
Three Mandalas from the Vajrāvālī  
Mid-15th century  
16 1/8 x 12 1/2 (41.3 x 31.8 cm)  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art;  
M.77.19.15  
Literature: G. Tucci 1949, no. 180 (plate Z),  
p. 600; P. Pott 1963, p. 209; and P. Pal  
1983, no. P16.

Ngor. He documented at least four that he had obtained at Ngor or explicitly linked with that monastery: thangkas number 7 (plate 4), p. 333; number 29 (plate 51), p. 371; “Four mandalas of Kyai rdo rje,” number 179 (p. 214), p. 599; and “Three Mandalas,” number 180 (plate Z), p. 600 (Fig. 3.1). The first two

he classified as Nepalese style and the second pair, a “composite style.”

When describing thangkas number 25 through 27 (plates 46–48), which portray Ngorchen’s lineage of the Path with the Fruit instructions, Tucci failed to note any link with Ngor, considering them to be lineal portraits of just the Sakya School. As for styles, he apparently divided earlier and later Beri styles into two categories: Nepalese and Sakyapa. He classified his Path with the Fruit guru portraits under the rubric of “Composite Style, Sakyapa,” and since he used Sakyapa as a stylistic category of sorts, a few later scholars copied this.<sup>49</sup>



### JOHN C. HUNTINGTON 1968

In 1968 John Huntington submitted his Ph.D. dissertation entitled “The Styles and Stylistic Sources of Tibetan Painting” at the University of California, Los Angeles. Though a pioneering study, it was never published with illustrations, which limited its usefulness and may be one reason that few subsequent scholars cited it.<sup>50</sup> A surprisingly broad investigation for its time, it shed light on several crucial topics, including the early Indian sources of Tibetan painting.

Huntington referred in many places to Nepalese stylistic sources. In chapter V, “Styles of Central Tibet,” p. 95, he mentioned four paintings linked with Ngor, of which he could discuss in detail only two. He followed the preliminary documentation given by Pal in his entries for the section “Tibet and Nepal” in the catalog of the Heeramanek Collection published two years previously in Boston.<sup>51</sup> Pal had there given some tentative definitions of the “Ngor school of painting,” based on a corpus of paintings studied by Tucci and later sold by him to the Herramanecks.

### PRATAPADITYA PAL 1969

In his first full-fledged Tibetan art catalog, *The Art of Tibet*, Pratapaditya Pal summarized his understanding of Tucci’s publications, which were his principal source, though diverging from him on some points:<sup>52</sup>

Due mainly to Tucci’s monumental efforts, not only can we form a fair idea of the history of Tibetan painting from about the eleventh century, but also we can establish a chronological frame of reference (see Tucci’s *Indo-Tibetica*). In central Tibet the significant monasteries are Narthang, Jonang, Shalu, rGyang and Gyantse. The murals of these monasteries unfold the continuous pageant of Tibetan

painting, after which the monasteries of Ngor, Samye, Tashilhunpo, Drepung and Potala continue the story into modern times.

Each monastery had a distinctive style of its own. ... Broadly, three distinct but interrelated traditions were nurtured within three areas—western, central and eastern Tibet. We will refer to these traditions as those of Guge, Sakya, and Kham.... The only [extrinsic national] tradition that seems to have consistently influenced Tibetan painting is that of Nepal.

Pal thus understood Tibetan styles not as main stylistic movements that were widely adopted in several or all provinces, but as styles specific to three main geographical regions. In another departure from Tucci, he adopted for one of those regions the nomenclature “tradition of Sakya,” by which he meant to designate the painting tradition of central Tibet. He did not differentiate between the regional styles that flourished in the two central Tibetan provinces of Ü and Tsang, nor did he mention Amdo Province.

### E. GENE SMITH 1970

In his introduction to the Indian reprint of Kongtrül’s “Encyclopedia” *Shes bya kun khyab*, E. Gene Smith presented a first summary of the history of Tibetan painting styles, based on Kongtrül’s brief synopsis. Smith explained about the Beri style:<sup>53</sup>

Until the 15th century, the mainstream of Tibetan painting had been rather slavishly following the models and canons that had been introduced through the Kathmandu Valley and were collectively known as BERI (*Bal-ris*) or the Nepalese style.

To that, Smith added in a footnote:<sup>54</sup>

Following Tāranātha [in his history of Buddhism in India], Kong-sprul notes that Tibetan art is initially from the art of Nepal, but that the Kashmiri influences were significant particularly in the western areas. One can distinguish three levels or strains in both the Nepalese Beri and Kashmiri Khache. The three factors that are involved in the makeup of the Beri are: 1) the Nub-rñing, the substratum; 2) the Śar-mthun, the Pāla style; 3) the synthesizing force that is the genius of the Nepalese people.

Smith’s failure to translate the phrase “Shar mthun” or to explain its correct sense misled some later scholars to understand it as a Tibetan name for the Indian Pāla style, rather than an abbreviated descriptive phrase meaning “Like the eastern [Indian style]” (*shar mthun*, short for *shar ris dang mthun pa*). In a subsequent revised edition, these three factors were emended to be three successive historical phases of the Newar style in Nepal: “The three phases of development of Newar art were: (1) the old western [Indian] (Nub rnying) style; (2) a style like the eastern Indian (Shar), i.e., the Pāla style; (3) the later Newar style.”<sup>55</sup>

### GILLES BÉGUIN 1977

The first scholar to exhibit a larger corpus of Beri paintings was Gilles Béguin at the Musée Guimet in Paris, who described them in an exhibition catalog of 1977. Although aware that his data allowed just conjectural datings, by specifying the limits of his knowledge he raised scholarly awareness of the difficulties faced by conscientious historians. He wrote about the Beri and related



painting traditions of Ngor (p. 125, my translation):

Since G. Tucci, one has been fond of using the expression “School of Ngor” to designate paintings of Nepalese style that were made in Tibet. This designation is perhaps too precise. Besides Ngor, other temples must have summoned Nepalese artisans. The persons commissioning such works, the Sakya hierarchs, were not limited to the abbots of Ngor. The number of these foreign artists is not known. We also do not know whether they had Tibetan helpers, and if so, to which degree.

But though Béguin criticized the unrestricted use of the term “Ngor School,” at the end of this same passage (p. 126), he continued to refer to “this style of Ngor,” at least regarding thangkas actually from Ngor. He went on to describe some typical features of this style:

All these paintings possess a number of special characteristics. Most possess inscriptions in Tibetan. Iconographically, three themes are frequently found: mandalas, for which we know the importance in the school of Ngor; representations of wrathful deities, very close to those that one meets with in the Kumbum of Gyantse; and “portraits” of the great lamas of the Sakya order, and their spiritual affiliation.

... Stylistically the artists, through much minute work, manage to multiply the personages, decorative motifs and innumerable small details that, in most cases, totally cover the surface. The principal figures stand out against a background of minuscule lotus finials, which are painted in cameos [i.e., in small medallions

or roundels]. The other minor figures can be placed in medallions made of lotus vines. The vegetal pilasters are also characteristic. As in Nepalese art, red and blue are the most frequent colors.

Béguin (*ibid.*) stressed that it was still too early to say anything definitive about the age or chronological development of paintings in this style:

Based on a comparison with [contemporaneous] monasteries, the earliest paintings of this style must go back to the fifteenth century, though they were certainly copied faithfully for several centuries. At the present time it is still impossible to attempt even the slightest chronology, not even a relative one.



FIG. 3.2  
Sachen with Lineage Gurus  
17th century  
115 3/8 x 76 in. (293 x 190 cm)  
Zimmerman Family Collection  
Literature: G. Béguin 1977, no. 123.

The very large painting that Béguin included at the end (Fig. 3.2, a portrait of Sachen from the Zimmerman Family Collection) dates to the mid-seventeenth century and represents a post-Beri style with prominent Beri vestigial features, including an ornate arch, linear arrangement of figures, and avoidance of landscapes. Its main figure is untypical of the Beri style, being larger than normal in relation to the background.



## ROBERT BURAWOY GALLERY 1978

By publishing a large and sumptuous auction catalog from Libourne in 1978, the gallery of Robert Burawoy sought to increase appreciation for “painting of Ngor.” The catalog referred to Ngor Monastery and its historical significance (my translation):<sup>56</sup>

Founded in 1429 by Kun dga’ bzang po in the south of Tibet, the monastery of Ngor was born from the Sakyapa sect, from which it differs only a little from a doctrinal point of view. Its importance comes from the moral prestige of its founder and the exceptional artistic effulgence it has enjoyed thanks to the quality of its paintings and in particular its mandalas, the most beautiful in Tibet, which render it famous.

As it turned out, the painting represented chronologically two extremes of “Ngorpa” painting. The first important set of mandalas presented by Burawoy (see, for example, Fig. 2.6 and Figs. 7.2 and 7.3) predated Ngorchen and was an important early commission of the Phagmotru (Phag mo gru pa) period. The second set, which portrayed lineal gurus and abbots (see, for example, Figs. 2.23 and 8.19), represented a very late Beri style and was one of the last known major abbatial commissions at Ngor.

## A. W. MACDONALD AND A. VEGATI STAHL 1979

Macdonald and Vergati Stahl in their book *Newar Art* provided much useful background information on Newar artistic culture, including architecture, manuscripts, and sculpture. On page 35, they summed up the account of Smith 1970 for a somewhat wider readership, discussing it within the context of cultural exchanges between the Newars and



Tibetans and in relation to the question of Newar influences on Tibetan art styles. They devoted a brief chapter to Newari sacred cloth paintings. On page 127, they briefly summarized what little they could then learn about the Newar Buddhist painting and its influence on Tibetan styles. They presented only four color plates of scroll paintings and few specifics about painting styles. But they did publish (see Fig. 3.3), a detail of an otherwise unknown inscribed scroll painting in Bhaktapur, Nepal, that depicts Vajradhara and the eighty-four adepts.

## JOHN C. HUNTINGTON 1980

In his 1980 review of the book of D.-I. Lauf (1976), John C. Huntington objected to Lauf’s not using the traditional school names. Summing up his own understanding of the traditional styles and their nomenclature, he wrote on the Beri style:

Bal-’bris “drawing [in the] Nepali (more accurately Newar) [manner],” may be seen in plates 3 and 4, while Nepali paṭa are illustrated in plates 58 and 59. The Nepali artists actually traveled to Tibet and were the masters for both

FIG. 3.3  
Vajradhara with Eighty-four Adepts (detail)  
Bhaktapur Museum, Nepal; ca. 1533?  
(dated 633 N.S.)  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: A. W. Macdonald and A. Vergati  
Stahl 1979, p. 134, plate VI.

mural and thangka paintings. Until about the mid-fifteenth century southern central Tibet, the gTsang District paintings were almost exclusively in this manner. However, by that time the sMan (d. 1409) school had begun to become important and there is a continuum of increasing Chinese influence in gTsang District painting until the division of the mKhyen School and the advent of the sMan-’bris ser-ma.

Huntington thus asserted that paintings in the Beri style dominated in Tsang Province until the mid-fifteenth century.

## PRATAPADITYA PAL 1984

In his book *Tibetan Paintings* Pratapaditya Pal (1984) attempted to provide a connected account of the history of thangkas from the eleventh through the nineteenth century. He



hoped to build mainly on Tucci's work from a stylistic and aesthetic rather than iconographic viewpoint. In his previous catalog of 1969, Pal had introduced the incorrect term "tradition of Sakya" as a blanket term for the one and only central Tibetan regional style.<sup>57</sup> Now he retained that same rubric of "Sakya" but used it to refer to the Newar-inspired style, introducing that style in much more detail, while ignoring traditional stylistic terms.

Pal (p. 62f.) listed five distinctive features of the Beri style, most of which he believed could be found in thangkas made for monasteries of the Sakya School between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries:

1. Ubiquitous use of red as predominant color
2. Strictly linear definition of form
3. Elaborate shrines with ornate columns supporting foliate arches, which consist of swirling masses of scrolls and volutes carrying mythical creatures (such as *makara*, *garuda*, *nāga*, and other hybrid forms combining animal and avian shapes)
4. Registers of figures at top and bottom, generally separated by miniature shrines of arches and columns and
5. A profusion of subtle, densely packed stylized scrollwork in the background that animates the otherwise formal and rigid symmetry of the composition

Pal (p. 63) further stressed the strictly geometrical arrangement of figures in the Beri style, in addition to the rigid symmetry of its paintings. But such formal elements were, he held, pleasantly balanced by "the variety of iconographic forms and the richness of their decorative details."

Some of the stylistic features of the Beri that Pal mentioned were unique to it, while some also occurred in the previ-



ous Eastern-Indian or Pāla-Sena style of Tibet (called here "Kadampa"). Pal was aware of this considerable overlap, and he described (p. 62) the Early Beri style when it first appeared in the fourteenth century as a new "composite style" that consisted of three main elements, the third of which was the older style: 1) Newar (i.e., Nepal, whose influence was more direct and pronounced), 2) Chinese (some of whose mannerisms and motifs were integrated), and 3) the previous Eastern-Indian style (then still widely established in Tibet).

Pal acknowledged (p. 65) that the lamas of the Sakya School must have adopted the Eastern-Indian or Pāla (his "Kadampa") style before the Beri. He

FIG. 3.4  
Four-armed Mahākāla  
1200–1250  
7 ½ x 5 ⅞ in. (19 x 15 cm)  
Collection of Lionel Fournier  
Literature: P. Pal 1984, pl. 13; and A. Heller 1999, no. 85.



also believed he had found an example of a Pāla style commission by a Sakya patron in the small thangka illustrated as his plate 13 (Fig. 3.4), which he dated to about 1200. (That painting turns out to be Kagyü and not Sakya art.) Note the lack of serrated edges on the flames, which may mark it as an early painting, if it is Beri.

Pal also assumed that the Pāla style of Tibet probably lingered on vestigially in the fourteenth century, thinking he found an example of the synthesis of Pāla and Beri in another thangka with the same subject likewise by a Kagyüpa patron, his plate 24. This looks like an example of a fairly orthodox mid-fourteenth-century Tibetan Beri style to me, though it is not Sakya art. The iconography of the gurus is interesting for its international character: the seventh and eighth lineage masters (rGwa lo and rTsa mi?) came from the Tangut kingdom of Central Asia (Xixia, Tib. Mi nyag) and hence wear hats similar to later Mongolian hats, something like the early Karmapas' hat, but red instead of black.

Pal's connoisseurship was widely appreciated in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>58</sup> Yet relatively few paintings had been firmly dated by then, and almost nobody consulted inscriptions or lineages. With the benefit of later research, we can classify the painting illustrated in his plate 18 of Green Tārā (Fig. 5.13) as an example of an early Beri, not Pāla, style, based on the subsequent research of J. Huntington, S. Kossak, and others.

Pal (p. 69) accurately specified the time that the Beri style at Ngor was "abandoned for a new mode of expression": the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, as later research confirms.<sup>59</sup> When introducing the "landscape traditions" of painting, his rubric covering the Menri, Khyenri (mKhyen ris), and Gardri (sGar bris) traditions, he dated the great stylistic changes from the strongly figural Indo-Nepalese traditions

through the incorporation of landscapes and "natural forms" to after the seventeenth century, following Tucci. But in a later passage (p. 152), he dated it a century earlier:

By the seventeenth century, it became increasingly popular with the Tibetans to use landscape settings for both their deities and lamas. Once again, as was the case with the Kadampa [Pāla] and Sakyapa [Beri] styles, all the religious orders adapted the same styles.

The major stylistic shift away from the Beri to the Menri and similar styles actually had begun already in the mid-fifteenth century, though they did not become adopted on a large scale until about the early sixteenth century. Since all religious schools commissioned art in the same styles in these early periods (until the mid-fifteenth century), it was superfluous to name the painting schools after them.

A preponderant number of Sakya School mandalas and lineal guru paintings confused Pal in 1984. The number of thangkas from the Sakya School is relatively smaller today. Why were so many thangkas from Ngor available in the 1970s and early 1980s? Tucci acquired a few prominent examples at Ngor, but not a disproportionately large number.<sup>60</sup> In the meanwhile, many other examples of seemingly Sakya School paintings from other traditions and dating from the fourteenth to sixteenth century have become available.

#### ROBERTO VITALI 1990

Roberto Vitali, in one chapter of his exploratory book *Early Temples of Central Tibet*, described the history and surviving works of art at Shalu Monastery. In his description of the Great Mother (Yum chen mo) Chapel of the old

Serkhang (gSer khang) Temple, he summarized some important Beri features of those murals:<sup>61</sup>

The influence of the Newar prototypes can still be felt among the characteristics of the Newar style of the Yuan court. The divisions of narratives into frames still occurs in some cases, though in a less rigid and intrusive manner. Pāla-type crowns, long adapted by the Newar tradition; composite *toranas*; medallioned decorations filling the whole space in the deities' backgrounds; simple lotus designs with petals in contrasting colors; ribbons and fan-like decoration at the temples; winged garments of minor figures [Vitali refers to his plate 46] recalling Newar garudas are all definite features of this surviving stylistic identity.

#### JOHN C. HUNTINGTON 1990

John C. Huntington presented a more detailed summary of traditional painting styles in 1990, in the extensive catalog he co-authored with Susan L. Huntington for an exhibition of Pāla art from India and neighboring countries. In part III of the catalog, "The Pāla Legacy Abroad: The Transmission to Nepal, Tibet and China," he discussed at length the identification and description of the stylistic schools, first carefully summarizing the available traditional Tibetan sources on Indian and Tibetan Buddhist art ("Introduction to Tibet and China," pp. 281–307).

Huntington described (p. 297) the "Early Tibetan Bal bris Schools" and (p. 297f.) the "Tibetan Bal bris/sku School(s)." He stressed a strong link between the latter and both Sakya and Ngor, calling the Beri the in-house style of those monasteries. He was not sure







FIG. 3.5 (also discussed as Fig. 7.6)  
Mandala of Hevajra  
Ca. 1400

31 ½ x 28 ¾ in (80 x 71 cm)

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. From the Berthe and John Ford Collection, purchase with funds provided by the Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund, the Kathleen Boone Samuels Fund, and the Robert A. and Ruth Fisher Fund, 91.509

Lit.: S. Huntington and J. Huntington 1990, no. 118.

when that link began. He further stated (p. 298), that the Beri style “could equally be called the Sa skya Bal school, especially when a work is made for the major patron of the style, the Sa skya pa,” adding, “The Bal (Beri) style became the Sa skya pa style for all types of works. The continued influence was undoubtedly due to the sustained pressure for more and more Sa skya works during the prosperous period of Mongol patronage in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.”

When discussing the origin of his painting number 113 (p. 331), Huntington mentioned two elements that he held to be found only in the art of Nepal and its Tibetan successors: 1) the ornate arch above the throne back “with the tails of the *makaras* evolving into convoluted infoliated motifs and emitting the *naga* tails that flow into/out of the *kirtimukha* face at the top of the configuration,” and 2) turned up, pointed tips of horizontal architectural members in the temple and on the throne base and back. (He illustrated the Nepali and Pāla conventions in his Figure 57.)<sup>62</sup>

Huntington (p. 338f.) listed several other Beri elements, namely some that place his catalog number 116 within the Beri School: 1) most important, the dominance of red in the color scheme, and 2) despite the appearance of lavish ornamentation, detailing that is rendered with imprecision bordering on crudeness. In addition to those two main ones:

3) the crown and hair arrangement of Vajrasattva differs from Pāla examples; it has an uppermost element, which is red and netted, supporting a flaming gem, and which has become a flattened ovoid shape, similar in shape to the two lumps of hair that support it. And also: 4) the long multicolored striped *dhoti* covering the legs of Vajrasattva differs from that in Pāla manuscript images.

Huntington (p. 343) helpfully describes several more key decorative elements of the Beri style that he found in a mandala of Hevajra (his catalog number 118; Fig. 3.5):

What marks this painting as Bal bris style are the details of its ornamentation and visual enrichment. For example, the divisions of the background of the large square of the mandala into four colored regions—one for each of the families of the Jina Buddhas—is iconographically determined. This entire area is covered with a series of vine scrolls consisting of alternating registers of lotuses, encircling leaves, and “pearl” motifs. The way these decorative elements are drawn and shaped are stylistically determined. The concept and general design are deeply rooted in the Pāla-Sena and subsequent Nepali traditions, wherein sweeping circular infoliations are common. However, the Bal bris artists interpreted the vine scrolls as small, tightly controlled circles, with the leaves and blossoms creating regular, repeating patterns. This treatment characterized many Sa skya Bal bris paintings of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Another Bal bris convention is the treatment of the vine scroll roundels in which the deities outside of the mandala have been placed. These are circular enfram-

ing motifs consisting of intertwining vines. They appear to float in space against a relatively light blue ground and are separated from the ground by a heavy black outline. This feature is an indigenous Tibetan development in the Bal bris School and particularly characterizes paintings from the gTsang District [Huntington refers to his catalog number 118].

A further characteristic of this style is the relative lack of foliage and flowers on the vine scrolls in which the figures occur. When they are inhabited by figures, vine scrolls in this tradition are generally nearly bare, being little more than circular frames for the deities and figures they encircle.

Another specific convention of the Bal bris School is the form of the pillars in the arcaded registers of the lineage and protective deities. When the pillars are present, as they are in the top and bottom registers of this painting, they usually consist of a vase (*Skt. kalaśa*) supporting a red pillar that culminates in a lotus capital supporting a bracket that in turn supports a compressed, trefoil arch. These pillars, sometimes in very elaborate versions, are often found in paintings of Sa skya hierarchs as part of the throne back or in place of a throne.

Huntington, in his interpretation of the lineage of catalog number 118, identifies guru number 18, “Chos rje bla ma,” as Khyenrab Chöje (mKhyen rab Chos rje), a noted master of Nalendra and Shalu Monasteries who died in the last decade of the fifteenth century.<sup>63</sup> But the final inscription (p. 345) indicates that the painting was actually completed about a century earlier. It was commissioned by Ngorchén’s teacher Yeshe Gyaltsen (Ye shes rgyal mtshan), in



memory of his guru, Palden Tshultrim, and not by Khyenrab Chöje. Huntington carefully recorded the inscriptions, which allowed his own dating to be later corrected. With the help of the lineage record of Ngorchen, guru number 18 in Huntington's list (p. 344) is clearly identifiable as Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen (Bla ma Dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, 1312–1375), not Khyenrab Chöje, and “19. Bla ma dpal ...” is surely Sharchen's guru, Palden Tshultrim (dPal ldan tshul khriims).<sup>64</sup> (I present the lineage in more detail below.)

In a related footnote, Huntington debunks the fiction that there ever existed a “Ngor School of painting,”<sup>65</sup> saying that the notion went back to Pal's entry in the Heeramanek Collection catalog of 1966 (Boston), especially entry number 138.<sup>66</sup> Pal based himself there on Tucci's erroneous speculation that the patron, Gyaltsen Öser (rGyal mtshan 'od zer), was probably an abbot of Ngor.<sup>67</sup> This led to an oft-repeated art-historical “folktale,” though Pal in his 1983 Los Angeles Tibetan catalog in the relevant entry said nothing to encourage the fable further.<sup>68</sup>

Huntington at the end (p. 614f.) charts the origins of Tibetan painting styles and the links between them. These charts are good for indicating separately the Tibetan traditions and their Indic roots, but they needlessly divide Sakya (Beri) styles in the fifteenth century into numerous separate branches. The charts also do not clearly indicate the demise of the Pāla international style in about the 1350s or 1360s or show the Beri becoming a universal Tibetan style at that time.

#### MARYLIN RHIE 1991

Marylin Rhie, in her catalog coauthored with Robert Thurman (1991), summarized in an introductory chapter the history of Tibetan art, touching several times on the Beri style or paintings from

Ngor. She called both Pāla and Newar styles “Indo-Nepalese styles” (somewhat like Tucci), not distinguishing them clearly. She rightly noticed the British Museum manuscript cover (her catalog number 122; Fig. 4.8 and 6.4) as an early Beri painting, though linking it to the Sakya School. Describing the middle-period Beri and some of its stylistic features, she perceptively observed (p. 51):

Although persisting for more than at least another three hundred years as a kind of “classic” type of composition, this style emerges as its most monumental grandeur during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Rhie (p. 60) distinguished three styles of the Sakya School in central regions, including the famous set of lineal portraits published by Burawoy:

This style [of the Zimmerman Gayadhara] represents possibly the last major stage of the brilliantly colorful, two-dimensional patterning and the traditional formalized composition derived from Indo-Nepalese heritage. However, this set of paintings also incorporates some elements of loose drapery style.

Rhie (p. 65) summarized the two main steps in Tibetan artistic development: Indo-Nepalese and Sino-Tibetan. When describing (p. 206) a painting from the much later Beri tradition of Ngor, she dated it purely by style to between 1550 and 1575 by comparing it with a painting from Guge, which was only about a generation too early. She remarked:

This style, which is related to the Indo-Nepalese stylistic traditions

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FIG. 3.6  
Sachen  
15th century  
45 x 37 in. (114.3 x 94 cm)  
Private Collection  
Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991, p. 201, no. 61; and S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998, no. 51.

but has become thoroughly Tibetan, indicates a provenance from the central regions. More than likely, it comes from Tsang, where this tradition was sustained for centuries, especially in painting schools relating to the many Sakyapa monasteries in that region.

By then the style was becoming a specialty of Ngor, at least in Tsang. Rhie (p. 56) describes the Ngor tradition as famous for its wall paintings, yet the murals of Ngor were never noted for the same excellence as its thangkas. Not realizing that paintings from Ngorchen's two main sets had survived, she still correctly considered Ngorchen's Vajrāvalī mandalas to be “an apogee of style,” while overlooking their connection with the monastery's founder. She dated them and a few other mandalas one or two generations too early, to the “late fourteenth century” or “circa 1400.”

Rhie followed Tucci 1949 in wrongly identifying the portrait of Sachen (her catalog number 61) as belonging to the major series of Path with the Fruit guru portraits described in a standard biography of Ngorchen. Tucci, for his part, cryptically called it a thangka of the masters of the transmission of the “verbal plane.” Here he misunderstood the phrase *gSung ngag rin po che* (lit. “Precious Instruction”), the usual honorific name for the Path with the Fruit. Rhie (p. 61, and again in the catalog entry on p. 203) considered features of this portrait to have not just a







coincidental similarity with certain contemporary Italian paintings, but to represent, more likely, East-West communication through the Silk Road with early Renaissance Italy. The thangka (Fig. 3.6) is no doubt a remarkable portrait. But stylistically it belongs firmly to a Tibetan and Sakya School milieu of about Ngorchen's time.

Up to the fifth guru, the masters portrayed are Sachen's lineal gurus, and after that all (except perhaps guru number 8) are his direct teachers. Even gurus number 9 and 11 are teachers of a special kind, since both taught him in visions.

#### JANE CASEY SINGER ET AL. 1993

Jane Casey Singer in an album of mandala illustrations published from London by Rossi and Rossi (J. C. Singer et al. 1993) wrote concerning the mandalas of Ngor: "Founded in ca. 1429, but destroyed [in the 1960s], Ngor Monastery was for centuries associated with magnificent painted mandalas, unsurpassed in iconographic complexity and aesthetic achievement." She then referred in a footnote to the catalog of the Robert Burawoy gallery (1978).

#### GILLES BÉGUIN 1990

Gilles Béguin discussed in his article of 1990 the Newar influences on Tibetan painting during the Phagmotru epoch. Examining and illustrating several interesting cases, he used the Shalu and Gyantse murals as points of comparison that stood at the two ends of the period under consideration. His stylistic nomenclature had not yet become the more definitive one of his Guimet Tibetan catalog, and datings of thangkas remained provisional.<sup>69</sup>

#### GILLES BÉGUIN 1995

Five years later, in his catalog raisonné of the Musée Guimet Tibetan painting collection, Gilles Béguin summarized and updated his findings on the "Nepalese" (i.e., Beri) style:<sup>70</sup>

The art of the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley influenced lastingly Tibetan art production. From the fourteenth through sixteenth century, in particular, the religious order of the Sakyapa contributed in large measure to spreading this style.... This aesthetic of a foreign origin, more or less adapted to the iconographic requirements of lamaist Buddhism and Tibetan taste, was equally propagated by the other [non-Sakya] monastic schools.

Béguin listed several of the most frequent decorative motifs, including the placement of figures between ornamental "pilasters" (pillar-like projections) and the placing of minor figures in rows, each within "aracatures" (small arched passageways).

Already in 1991, when invited as an expert witness in a Swiss court case, Béguin described a four-phase development of the Beri style in Tibet.<sup>71</sup> Despite the absence of firmly datable works, Béguin in 1995 believed he could discern an evolution of the Beri style and divide the Guimet thangkas into three consecutive groups:

1. The most ancient pieces (dating to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries)
2. The apogee of this aesthetic (about the late fifteenth century)
3. The latest thangkas (dating to the sixteenth century)

He held that one can witness in the third group a slow disappearance of such typical stylistic features as the schemes of

composition and the characteristic motifs of style and a dry formality in the arrangement. He referred to the Musée Guimet thangka number MA 6008 (which he dated to the sixteenth century), in particular, as one of two examples of the third period, asserting that most of the Guimet paintings in the Beri style belonged to the second period.

Béguin (p. 60 and his Figs. 26–28) stressed the rich diversity of purely decorative elements present in Beri paintings, noting that their scrollwork alone would suffice as material for a future special study. He also observed the existence of a group of paintings of tantric deities executed in China in the late fifteenth century that form their own group within Newar-inspired paintings. (His best example for that Beri sub-school was a painting of Hevajra and other deities, his catalog number 141 and Figure 28, in which the flames had become notably more Chinese.) He included the style of the Gyantse murals no longer under the rubric of "Nepalese Style," but as a separate style, noting that some thangkas incorporated the new stylistic currents seen at Gyantse.

#### HEATHER STODDARD 1996

In her article of 1996 Heather Stoddard summarized her stylistic findings, classifying Tibetan painting styles from about 1000 to 1400 into four major styles:

1. Central Asian (Li lugs), in central Tibet (Ü and Tsang) during the earliest period
2. Indian or Pāla (rGya lugs), dominating Kagyü Schools in Ü and Lhokha from the eleventh through fourteenth century
3. Newari style in Tsang (Bal ris), circa 1200 onward
4. Kashmiri style (formerly the "Gu ge School") in western Tibet, eleventh through seventeenth century



In addition to two minor, more hypothetical styles,<sup>72</sup> she added (p. 44f.) arhats and Lokapālas as a separate seventh theme, though as an iconographic group and not a separate style. The localities that she specified for each style are not restrictive, and she mentions (p. 39), for example, a “rather naive version” of the Indian style, for instance, in two temples of Alchi in Ladakh in western Tibet.

Her description of the Newari style, which originated from the Kathmandu Valley (pp. 40–43), is one of the most detailed. Having postulated (p. 38) the location of the Tibetan Pāla style as Ü Province of central Tibet, and linked it most closely not with the Kadampa, but rather the Kagyü Schools, she noted that the extant paintings in the Beri style start off a little later than those in the Tibetan Pāla style. Geographically, here she stressed that its paintings “are most strongly associated with the province of gTsang, one reason being no doubt that it lies closest to Nepal. The style is intimately linked with Sakya, and by the mid-thirteenth century it had spread from that great monastery directly through the Mongol court thanks to the invitation of Sa skya Paṇḍita, his nephew ‘Phags pa, and a little later on, the famous Newari artist Anige.” She arranged Beri-style paintings from about 1200 to the 1420s into three main groups, listing at the same time the themes typically portrayed in each:

1. Tathāgatas and bodhisattvas, circa 1200 to circa 1300? Also mandalas, to circa 1330?
2. Tantric deities and mandalas, from the mid- or late fourteenth through fifteenth century
3. Late fourteenth through early fifteenth century. This was the beginning of a full-blown “Tibetan style” centered in Tsang in the Gyantse stupa.

Since her theme did not extend to later (i.e., post-1400) periods, she ended her description of styles in the early fifteenth century, without sketching the final phases of the Beri style’s history.<sup>73</sup>

#### STEVEN KOSSAK 1997 AND 1998

Steven Kossak treated the Beri style in the introductory chapter “The Development of Style in Early Central Tibetan Painting,” which was published in a noteworthy catalog on early Tibetan painting, *Sacred Visions*.<sup>74</sup> He also contributed a relevant article in 1997, “Sakya Patrons and Nepalese Artists in Thirteenth-Century Tibet” (in J.C. Singer and P. Denwood eds. 1997, pp. 26–37). Though working with a relatively small corpus of examples, most of which lacked inscriptions, he could establish several key stylistic traits of the Early Beri, also finding a few parallels in contemporary Nepalese painting. He was one of the first to specify stylistic grounds for distinguishing Pāla-style paintings from Early Beri paintings.

Kossak concerned himself mainly with paintings from the period 1200 to 1450, thus leaving out later Ngorpa paintings. He described several more important features of the early Nepal-inspired style, significantly adding to Béguin and Pal’s descriptions, though the previous two had mainly described paintings of the middle and later period.<sup>75</sup> He noted, for instance, that in a surviving illuminated Sanskrit manuscript from Nepal, the main figure, a goddess, had a rounder face and plumper body. The multi-lobed tiara of that goddess was composed of teardrop-shaped elements and her throne back was also distinctive.

Kossak investigated early fourteenth-century murals of Shalu, describing (p. 43) the following similarities with most early Nepalese-style thangkas:

1. Use of elaborate detail throughout
2. *Toranas* [i.e., decorative backrest arches] of a similar configuration
3. The exaggerated Newar facial type
4. Intensification of the blue background around the edges of the main figures

Kossak noted (p. 47) that by the second half of the fourteenth century, the Nepalese (Beri) style had begun to supplant the style of Pāla-ruled eastern India (called by Tibetans *shar ris*, “Eastern [Indian] Painting”). He further asserted (ibid., following Tucci) that by the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the Tibetans began to “emerge from the shadows of China, India and Nepal, and developed a hybrid style that drew from each but was truly their own.” He found the high point of the Beri style in the first three decades of the fifteenth century in the murals of the Gyantse stupa.

Kossak linked early paintings in the Beri style with the Sakya School. He advanced several highly appealing hypotheses about individual paintings, though the available evidence was, strictly speaking, circumstantial. He proposed a brilliant theory about the origin of the Green Tārā in Cleveland (Fig. 5.13) as a work of the Newar master court artist Anige (as Stoddard 1996, p. 41, had). Similarly, he posited (p. 143) a link between a painting of Amoghasiddhi (Fig. 6.3, his catalog number 36c) and early lay masters of Sakya. Though hard supporting evidence is still lacking, these theories remain good working hypotheses.

#### JANE CASEY SINGER AND P. DENWOOD EDS. 1997

An international conference on Tibetan art styles organized in 1994 in London by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, stimulated more documentation of the Early



Beri. The resulting book, *Tibetan Art: Towards a Definition of Style* (London: 1997), edited by Jane Casey Singer and P. Denwood, clarified several important early phases in the stylistic history of the Beri, in particular, through the contributions by Hugo Kreijger on murals at Shalu, by Helmut Neumann on cave murals at Luri in Mustang (also treated in an article in *Orientalism*), and by Steven Kossak on Sakya patrons and Nepalese artists in thirteenth-century Tibet. The same book contained chapters on two important later surviving sites of Beri murals: Keith Dowman (on the Great Maitreya Temple of Mustang) and F. Ricca (on the murals of Gyantse).

#### KEITH DOWMAN 1997

In his introduction to the murals of the Great Maitreya Temple of Mustang, Keith Dowman proposed “Tibeto-Newar School” as his name for the Tibetan Beri style in Mustang and elsewhere. By this term he meant to refer to four main things:<sup>76</sup>

1. The pervasive artistic influence that the Newars brought to Tibet (throughout the second dissemination and in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, in particular)
2. The diverse Newar-derived styles found in Mustang and at various sites in Tsang, including Sakya, Shalu and Gyantse, and in many thangkas painted during the period of Sakya ascendancy
3. The Newar style that succeeded the Pāla and Central Asian styles in Tibet, and which became the basis for the fully developed Tibetan style of the late fifteenth and sixteenth century, and
4. A Newar style modified by Tibetan influence (rather than vice-versa) as found at Shalu

Dowman, perhaps following Tucci,

greatly overestimated the extent and duration of Newar artistic influence in Tibet.<sup>77</sup> This overestimation led him to his point (4), that this should be counted a Newar style modified by Tibetan influence, not the other way around. Yet surely Dowman in all four points was talking mainly about a Newar-influenced Tibetan style. “Tibeto-Newar” is thus not felicitous and should be corrected to “Newar-Tibetan School,” if a hyphenated name is used, such as the acceptable term Sino-Tibetan.

#### PRATAPADITYA PAL 1997

Pratapaditya Pal, in the keynote address for that London conference on style, briefly addressed the problem of how best to name styles, asserting that (p. 11) “Terminology must be decided upon unanimously and, once accepted, adhered to rigorously.” He added (p. 12): “The broad framework for recognizing styles by using geographical and chronological factors was suggested originally by Tucci. I refined the approach somewhat in my catalog of ... 1969. The three regional categories of eastern, central and western are now generally accepted.”

Here Pal seems to confuse style with provenance, unless he is propounding the existence of a single style in each region. Each of the five provinces of Tibet was actually home to more than one style. Moreover, for art historians, neither the rubrics “eastern” or “central” is exact enough, since both eastern and central Tibet consisted of two distinct provinces. To be useful, province-based categories should accord with the established Tibetan names for the five provinces: Ü, Tsang, Kham, Amdo, and Ngari. The resulting styles should accordingly be called: Ü style (*dbus ris*), Tsang style (*gtsang bris*), Kham style (*kham bris*), etc., if used.

Pal remained strictly averse to hyphenated terms such as Newar-Tibetan,

holding that such terms “really do disservice to the originality of the Tibetan artists; such terms serve as constant reminders of their dependence on foreign traditions.” Yet the Tibetans had no similar aversion to acknowledging their dependence on India and Nepal in the earliest stages of their art history, and they feel no compunction to claim artistic originality for their early artists. Nor should they, for as Susan Huntington pointed out about paintings made in dependence on Indian Buddhist art:<sup>78</sup>

Closely copied works are by no means inferior, as might be inferred from a Western perspective in which originality is considered a measure of artistic worth. Rather, these works of art reflect an approach to creativity that values expression within the parameters established by tradition.

H. Stoddard in her article on early painting styles replied to some of the assertions of Pal, justifying the use of hyphenated names or names that indicate geographical origins, since the terms used by Tibetans reflect the priorities of the Tibetans with the surrounding lands.<sup>79</sup> Though Pal similarly remained (p. 12) “opposed to the use of Indian state or dynastic names, such as Khache, Sharthun, etc.—even in their Tibetan translation—to designate Tibetan styles,” he did not explain why we should reject a term like Beri, which has been employed for centuries by Tibetan savants.

#### AMY HELLER 2002

Amy Heller in her article on whether Atiśa visited Shalu—including possible art-historical considerations—remarked, “The mural paintings of the [Shalu] *mgon khang* [protector’s chapel] show marked influence of Newar painters adapting Indian aesthetic models.”<sup>80</sup>



Looking for stylistic orientation in some of the eleventh-century murals of Shalu, she contrasted some main characteristics of early Newari- and Pāla-Sena-style painting. Here she summarized the findings of J. Losty, who had compared illuminated manuscripts from Nepal, Bihar, and Bengal dating from the twelfth through the fourteenth century.<sup>81</sup> The main characteristics of each group were:

For Nepal: “somewhat rounded face, tubular limbs, palette of red/orange contrasted with dark blue, volume created by color modeling.”

For India: “more oval face, heavier limbs and torso, exaggeratedly curvaceous standing and seated postures, soft tone red but bright orpiment yellow, volume created by outline.”

#### JOHN C. HUNTINGTON AND DINA BANGDEL 2003

John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel in a monumental catalog of Nepalese tantric Buddhist art and ritual objects (*The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art*) documented several key Beri paintings. Many entries (which include contributions by numerous University of Ohio students) mention the Beri style. With reference to a thangka portraying Cakrasamvara and consort as its main figures (catalog number 71), Bengdal alluded to the complexity of style, provenance, and attribution of paintings of the Beri style (she referred also to catalog numbers 14 and 152). She continued (p. 268):

The Bal ri or “Newar School” of painting in Tibet reflects the intricate relationship between the Newar artist and the Tibetan patron. While the iconography is specific to the individual requirements

of the Tibetan patron, the basic stylistic elements are fundamentally Newar. For example, the rich red palette of the painting, the circular roundels of the floral motifs used to embellish the solid background that is characteristic of 14th- and 15th-century Nepalese paintings, the animated facial expression of the central figures, the exquisite detail of the jewelry and bone ornaments, as well as the charming vignettes of the charnel fields all indicate the stylistic aesthetics of the Newar painting tradition. A close comparison with the sketchbook of Jivarama dated 1435 demonstrates that the Newar artists were familiar with specific Tibetan iconography, but still maintained a style that is uniquely Newar (see catalog number 152). The artistic skills of the Newar artists of the Kathmandu Valley were traditionally greatly sought after in Tibet...

... The size of the painting, the superb quality of the brushwork, the brilliant palette and gem-like details provide a strong argument that this was painted either by an artist such as Jivarama, who was well aware of the aesthetic and iconographic demands of his Tibetan patron, or by a Tibetan highly skilled in the Newar style.... Yet the style is purely Newar, created by a Newar artist familiar with the aesthetic demands of his Tibetan art, or by a well-trained Tibetan artist working in the Newar Bal bris style. This author would, however, argue for the former, since some of the subsidiary elements are uniquely Newar. For example, in the charnel fields, the depiction of two priests wearing Vajracharya crowns.

Contributors to the catalog also mention thangkas in the Beri style or Ngor

Monastery, for instance on pages 42 and 96.

#### SUMMARY

Scholarship on the Beri style has thus progressed considerably since the first efforts of Tucci six decades ago. Though he and other early researchers overestimated the extent and duration of Newar influence in Tibet, in recent years, scholars have begun to describe more reliably and in more detail sites of surviving murals and a few early individual thangkas. Yet the documentation of both murals and thangkas remains uneven and many datings of individual thangkas conjectural. Few scholars took the trouble to check the sectarian affiliation of thangkas by investigating the lineages they portrayed or reading their inscriptions.







MANY PREVIOUS SCHOLARS asserted that the Beri style had special connections with the Sakya Order. But can we confirm such a link when we study the paintings in detail, taking into account the specific lineages and inscriptions on individual thangkas?

Many scholars believed that the lamas of Sakya were closely linked with Newar artisans at least from the time of the Yuan dynasty (beginning in the 1260s), basing themselves on the story of the Newar prodigy Anige's being summoned by Chögyal Phakpa and Qubilai Khan to work at the Yuan imperial court, where he soon became the highest-ranking artist in the newly founded Yuan empire. H. Stoddard, in her article on early painting styles, explicitly postulated that the Beri style's primary provenance was Tsang and its religious context the Sakya School, while asserting a different provenance and religious school for the Pāla style (Ü and Kagyüpa).<sup>82</sup> But how narrowly defined was the geographical base of the Beri (or any other style) in this period? Was the context of religious patronage restricted enough between 1200 and 1460 to justify calling the Beri a "Sakya" painting style?

For the period between about the 1360s and 1450s, at least, it was not. One style was then shared by all religious traditions, so we can hardly name it after just one of those schools. But what about before the 1360s? Did the Sakya School and other schools patron-

ize essentially the same style or styles in the twelfth century, for instance?

#### EARLIEST SAKYA ART: STILL HARDLY KNOWN

Such questions are impossible to answer without investigating in more detail the art patronized by the earliest founders of Sakya. Past scholars devoted just a few sporadic efforts to elucidating individual pieces of very early Sakya art, and thus the subject still remains practically unexplored. We know from a very small number of surviving thangkas that the Sakya founders or their disciples also patronized Tibetan Pāla style art. (See, for example, the top of Figure 4.1, an early woven thangka of Blue Acala published in *Bod kyi thang ka*, number 102, but even this is considered to be a Yuan-period weaving of an earlier painting.)<sup>83</sup> It is still too early to generalize about the earliest Sakya art, since the temples of Sakya dating to this period, the northern complex of the monastery were destroyed in the 1960s during the Great Cultural Revolution. All we have to go by are a few surviving thangkas and written references.

One lucky survival of Sakya patronage from the thirteenth century is the painting illustrated in full as Figure 6.3 and here in details as Figures 4.3a and 4.3b (details of Fig. 6.3). Originally one of a set of five thangkas depicting the Tathāgatas or Jinas of the Five Buddha Races (*rgyal ba rigs lnga*), this was the fifth and last painting of its set, the one portraying the green Tathāgata

Amoghasiddhi. S. Kossak has correctly identified this as the earliest known Newar painting with a probable connection with Sakya.

Though the painting lacks inscriptions, an argument for a link with Sakya can be made through iconography. As Kossak noted, one of the two Tibetan patrons in the bottom-left corner and the lama in the top-right corner are clearly laymen: two of them wear white inner robes.<sup>84</sup> (White robes were worn by the first three of the five great founders of Sakya, who were, therefore, commonly called the "Three White [-Robed] Ones" [*dkar po rnam gsum*].) Kossak calls the patron in the bottom corner an "officiating monk," but the patron also wears a long-sleeved layman's upper robe, though it is red. If these three really depict the first three great founders of Sakya, then the personages portrayed were much more than the usual lay patrons. The high spiritual status of one of the three is confirmed by his position as a guru at the top of the painting.

If we follow Kossak's idea to its logical conclusion, this painting and the masters it depicts would fit the situation at Sakya in about the 1170s. The lower pair of lay patron-masters (Fig. 4.3a) would be, to our left, the still fairly young, long-haired laymen Sönam Tsemo (d. 1182) and, to our right, his somewhat younger brother Drakpa Gyaltshe (1147–1216). Above (Fig. 4.3b), as the two brothers' revered (and presumably deceased) father and main guru is Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (d. 1158). Accordingly, the painting would

Detail of Fig. 6.3





FIG. 4.1  
 Blue Acala  
 Early 14th century, after an earlier painted  
 model  
 Woven silk  
 35 ½ x 22 ½ in. (90 x 56 cm)  
 Potala Palace, Lhasa  
 Literature: Rig 'dzin rdo rje *et al.* eds. 1985,  
*Bod kyi thang ka*, no. 102.





FIG. 4.2  
Sakya, the northern complex of temples,  
seen from the east  
Photograph by P. Aufschnaiter in 1951,  
Archiv Völkerkundemuseum der Universität  
Zürich  
Literature: M. Henss 1981, p. 133.



FIG. 4.3A (detail of Fig. 6.3, bottom-left  
corner)

FIG. 4.3B (detail of Fig. 6.3, top-right  
corner)



date to the twenty-four-year period between 1158 (the death of Sachen) and 1182 (the death of Sönam Tsemo), though it seems more likely to have been commissioned in the later half of that period, between 1170 and 1182, since Drakpa Gyaltsen only turned 23 years of age in 1170. (The renderings of the patrons in this painting should one day be compared with the other earliest depictions of these masters.)

If the two patrons were the two revered sons of Sachen, Figure 6.3 and the other paintings of this set would date to the second half of the twelfth century, that is, two or three decades *before* the cataclysmic destruction of Buddhism in Bihar and Bengal. Kossak's positing (p. 143) a link between this painting and early lay masters of Sakya is the best available hypothesis. True, the protector pictured at the bottom of painting number 36c (Fig. 6.3) is not Mahākāla Gönpö Gur (mGon po Gur) of the Sakya School but rather Four-armed Mahākāla (mGon po Phyag bzhi pa). But that is not enough to disprove the hypothesis. Moreover, painting number 36c is not the only one from this period with lay patrons. Painting number 28 in S. Kossak and J. Singer 1998 also has such lay patrons. But it seems less likely to have been inspired by Sakya patronage. We should not forget that in the second half of the twelfth century, many masters remained laymen, and full monastic ordination was not yet as widespread as it later became. In the Sakya tradition, for instance, Sachen's grandson Sakya Pandita was the first among the founding masters to take full ordination, which he did only in the first decade of the thirteenth century. But the lay patron in number 28 lacks the key iconographic element of white robes, which the early Sakya lamas were famous for. Meanwhile, the lay patron in number 23c clearly does wear a white inner robe, but the painting set is in a Pāla style!





FIG. 4.4  
The great southern monastery of Sakya,  
Lhakhang Chenmo, seen from the hill to  
the north  
Photograph by P. Aufschnaiter in 1951,  
Archiv Völkerkundemuseum der Universität  
Zürich  
Literature: M. Henss 1981, p. 135.



FIG. 4.5  
Buddha statues with Newar gild mandorlas  
Sakya, the southern monastery, Lhakhang  
chenmo  
A'u Khra'o kud 1985, plate no. 18, "Statues  
of Shākya Muni"

Thus not enough paintings survive for us to prove or disprove that the first four founding masters of Sakya (who flourished from roughly the 1160s through the 1250s) showed a special preference for Newar art or artists. Yet it is almost a forgone conclusion that they knew and patronized the Newar style, if only because of the close proximity of Sakya to Nepal. Moreover, during the subsequent period of Sakya/Yuan rule, one would expect that with the passing of time the Beri increased in popularity. (We do know that some thangkas of the Sakya School were painted in the Pāla style during the Yuan period.)<sup>85</sup>

A rough idea of what religious art survives at Sakya can be gained from two books on that monastery that were published in Tibetan in the 1980s or early 1990s. The first, entitled simply *Sakya Monastery* (*Sa skya dgon pa*), was published in 1985 in Beijing by the Tibet Autonomous Region Cultural Relics Management Commission (Bod rang skyong ljongs Rig dngos do dam U yon lhan khang), and it has a brief introductory history of Sakya by Dungkar Losang Thrinlay (gDung dkar Blo bzang phrin las). Its main text was written in Chinese by A'u Khra'o-kud and then



FIG. 4.6  
Interior of Assembly Hall with shrine  
The Southern Temple of Sakya  
Literature: A'u Khra'o-kud 1985, *Sa skya dgon pa*, no. 15, "The arrangement of the interior of the Lhakhang Chenmo" (*lha khang chen mo'i 'du khang nang gi bkod pa*).



translated into Tibetan by Rigdzin Dorje. Presenting more than a hundred color illustrations, especially major early gilt statues but also many later murals and thangkas, the book gives a broad sampling of surviving religious works of art.

The second book, *History of Glorious Sakya Monastery and Brief Biographies of Its Successive Throne Holders* (*dPal ldan sa skya dgon gyi lo rgyus dang khri pa rim byon gyi rnam thar mdor bsdus*), was published in 1987 by the Tibet People's Publisher (Bod ljongs Mi dmangs dPe skrun khang) possibly in Lhasa. It was compiled and written by the Tashi Lhunpo history-writing committee, led by Döndrup Phüntshok (Don grub phun tshogs). Though mainly presenting a history of the monastery, it also included color illustrations of four sacred objects, including two important gilt statues.<sup>86</sup>

But even that wealth of surviving sacred art cannot yet be taken into account systematically, since the contents of the temple remains off-limits to scholars. Moreover, most of the original murals were repainted during an extensive renovation in the first half of the twentieth century. When at Sakya in 1986, I never saw the mandala murals from the Yuan period that survive on the walls of the Northern Chapel (Lha khang Byang ma) of this great structure. Of those murals, I have access only to one photo-



FIG. 4.7  
Detail of mandala mural  
Sakya, Lhakhang Jangma  
Late 13th century  
Photograph by Helmut Neumann (Ti94–790  
Lhakhang Jangma)

graph of a single detail (Fig. 4.7). Nor have I seen thangkas dating to the period of Sakya rule or earlier, though some three thousand thangkas are said to survive, including “over 360 from the Sung, Yuan and Ming dynasties” (in addition to the 20,000 books and many statues).<sup>87</sup>

## WRONG SAKYA OR NGORPA IDENTIFICATIONS

For several decades, many reputable scholars assumed that the Sakya School had commissioned the vast majority of Beri paintings. That assumption sometimes influenced them to automatically classify any early Beri paintings, especially lama portraits or mandalas with lineages, as art of the Sakya School.

One such wrong attribution was made for Figure 4.8, one of the earliest surviving works of the Beri style. The lineage lamas depicted in this old wooden manuscript cover clearly belong to the Kadampa Order. If the lineage is complete as shown, as I assume, then its patron would date to about the third quarter of the twelfth century. (I discuss this painting in more detail in chapter 6 as Figure 6.4.)

Another striking early painting that was at first attributed to the Sakya School is Figure 4.9, which depicts a

FIG. 4.8  
Manuscript Cover, inner side, depicting  
Prajñāpāramitā  
Ca. 1150–1175  
Painted wood; 28 ¼ x 10 ½ x 1 ⅞ in.  
(71.8 x 26.7 x 28 cm)  
The British Museum  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991,  
no. 122; and P. Pal and J. Meech-Pekarik  
1988.









great Buddhist master with his lineage and one main disciple. P. Pal published it in his catalog of 1997, describing its subject as “a Sakyapa hierarch and lineage” from about 1250.<sup>88</sup> The thangka embodies a presumably Newar-influenced style that differs markedly from the better-known Pāla-style paintings of the Taklung Kagyü (sTag lung bKa’ brgyud) School of the same period.

Iconographically, the lineage depicted can only be an early Dakpo Kagyü (Dwags po Bka’ brgyud) lineage. Nothing in the iconography links any of its figures to the Sakya tradition, and the main figure is most assuredly not Sakya Pandita. Its structure is shown in diagram [A].

Who is the main figure (number 8 in the chart)? He is most likely a major disciple of the master Phagmotrupa (Phag mo gru pa, number 7), i.e., he belonged to the same generation as Taklung Thangpa Chenpo (Stag lung thang pa chen po) or Drigung Jigten Sumgön (‘Jig rten gsum mgon). The main figure is accompanied by a prominent disciple (number 9), which may be historically significant. If, for instance, this painting proves to be from the Drigung tradition (one of several possi-

bilities), that student could be Jigten Sumgön’s important nephew and assistant, Sherab Jungnay (Shes rab ‘byung gnas). Theoretically, number 7 could also be a nephew of Gampopa (Sgam po pa), namely Gomtshül (Sgom tshul), and then number 8 would be from the generation of Lama Shang (Bla ma Zhang). The lay patron would seem to belong to generation 9, though possibly he was also a disciple of number 9.

The proposed dating to about 1250 would have worked if the painting had depicted Sakya Pandita, as first claimed. But given the presence of this Kagyü lineage, that dating is probably four or five decades too late. The main figure (number 8), whoever he may have been, probably flourished in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The painting seems to be an example of a very early Beri style. The only places that I see scrollwork are on body and head nim-buses. The flames behind wrathful deities lack serrated edges.

Figure 4.10 is not in a typical Newar style. Note the presence of multi-color jewel edges in some places—though not at the top and bottom edges. The bodhisattvas to the right and left of the central stupa are clearly Newar in style, and the stupa itself is decorated with much Newar scrollwork. It may be a transitional Tibetan Beri painting dating to the late Sakya period.

This thangka, too, was wrongly attributed at first to the Sakya tradition. The author of the catalog argued by process of elimination: “It is not Kagyü, nor is it Kadampa; therefore, it must be

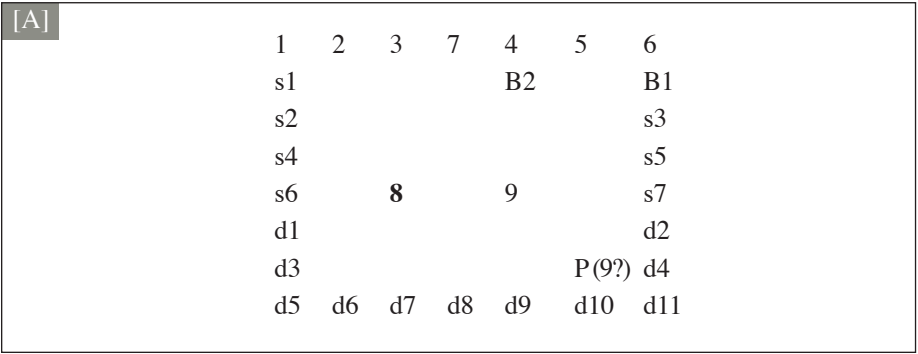
Sakya.” Yet several other possible lineages or schools existed besides the Sakya School. In this case the lineage (actually several lineages?) seems to be of the Pacifying (Zhi byed) instructions of Phadampa Sanggye or another uncommon tradition. (See the distinctive dark-skinned Indian adept with a white lower robe in the third row, third from the right.) No evidence links the painting with the Sakya School.

The main figure of Figure 4.11 was wrongly identified as Sakya Pandita, though this depiction does not agree with the established iconography of that master. The lineage behind him actually depicts a sequence of Kadampa masters, who presumably include the subsequent abbots of Narthang, since the thangka was found and photographed in that monastery.

The lineage can be recognized and reconstructed (see diagram [B]) even from a cropped black-and-white illustration. Gurus number 1 and 2 are clearly Atiśa and Dromtön. The thangka has been previously dated to the second half of the thirteenth century, but the lineage points to a later period. If the masters portrayed are indeed the Kadampa lineage of Narthang, the final figure might be master number nineteen in the Narthang lineage. According to the Kadampa lineage of Narthang given by Gö Lotsawa in his *Blue Annals* (p. 283), he would be the master Sönam Chokdrup (bSod nams mchog grub), whose tenure as Narthang abbot was from 1418 to 1433. But even if the main figure depicts another Kadampa master from about this period, there is no reason to link him with the Sakya School or its art.

Another example of a painting from the period of the Middle or Universal Beri style that might seem at first glance to originate from the Sakya School is Figure 4.12. Its construction is not standard because it includes tutelary deities on the top line, above the gurus.

FIG. 4.9  
Kagyü Master with Lineage and Disciple  
1200–1230  
19 x ½ x 16 in. (49.8 x 40.9 cm)  
Collection of Navin Kumar, New York  
Photograph courtesy Navin Kumar  
Literature: P. Pal 1997, pl. 23.





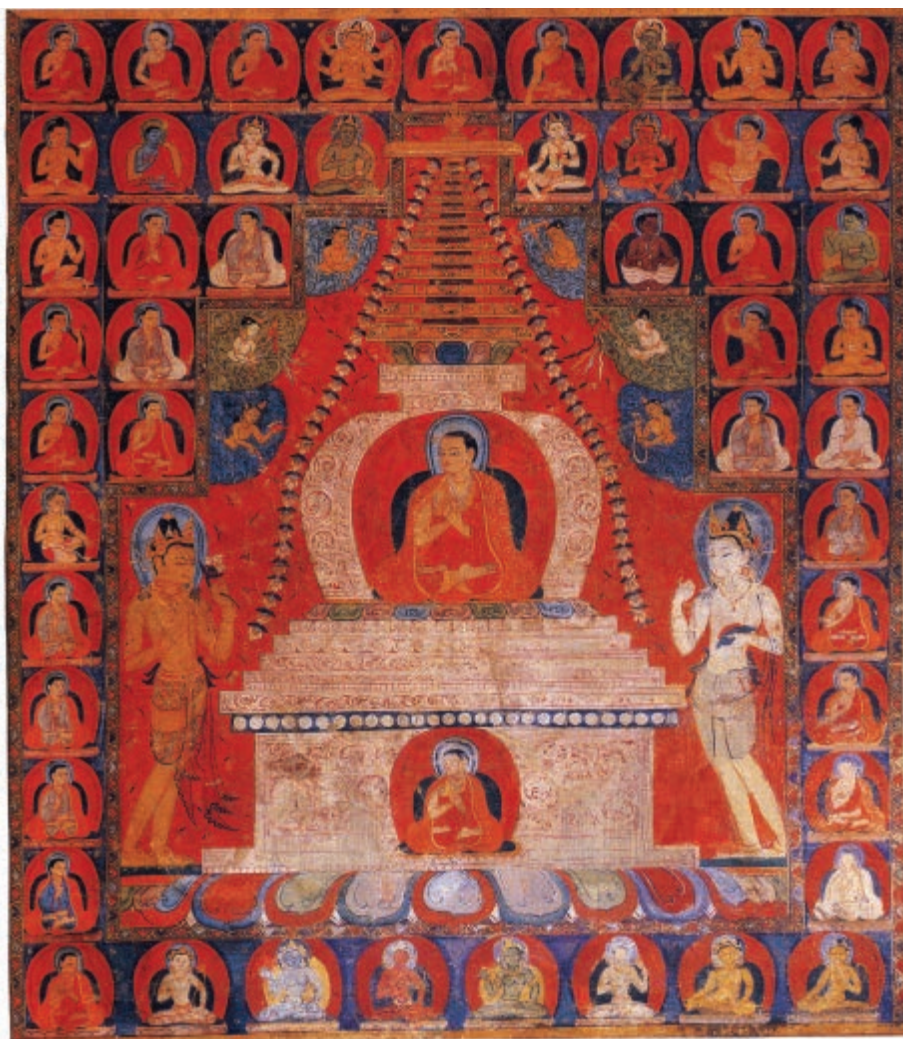


FIG. 4.10  
Lama in a Stupa with Lineage  
Ca. 14th century  
16 ½ x 14 ¾ in. (42 x 36.5 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: H. Kreijger 1999, no. 1.

Here the iconography of those gurus reveals them to be a full Kagyü lineage (though the subject of the thangka was previously identified as two Sakya masters with lineage).<sup>89</sup> A small lama in the middle wears a black hat, and he is probably a Karmapa, perhaps the guru of one of the main figures. In any case, the painting was most likely commissioned by a Kagyü patron in about the late fourteenth century.<sup>90</sup>



FIG. 4.11  
Abbot of Narthang  
1420s–1440s  
Dimensions unknown  
Narthang Monastery, Tsang Province  
Literature: I-se Liu 1957, fig. 18; and M. Rhie in M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, p. 54.

### A FINAL CASE

H. Stoddard in her brief survey of early painting styles postulates that the primary provenance of the Beri style was Tsang Province and that its main religious context of patronage was the Sakya School.<sup>91</sup> (She also asserted that the main provenance and religious school of the Tibetan Pāla style were Ü Province and the Kagyüpa School.) But in her article of 2003 (Stoddard 2003b), she investigates the matter further, searching for the telltale Newar “flourishing garuda *toranas*” in paintings of the Sakya School, expecting to find them as a link between Sakya and Newar styles. Though such decorative backrest arches with a *garuda* (part bird, part

[B]									
	[7]	5	3	1		2	4	6	[8]
	[13]	11	9				10	12	[14]
	[17]	15						16	18
						19?			





FIG. 4.12 (also discussed as Fig. 2.25)  
 Two Kagyü Patriarchs  
 Ca. late 14th century  
 18 1/8 x 14 1/8 in. (46 x 36 cm)  
 Hahn Cultural Foundation  
 Literature: K. Tanaka 1997, no. 39.





FIG. 4.13 (also discussed as Fig. 5.3)  
Portrait of a Drukpa Kagyü Master  
Ca. 1280–1310  
30 ¼ 23 172 in. (77 x 59.7 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
(1991.304)  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
no. 30.

human creatures associated with the sun and the air) at their tips were assumed to be typical early Beri elements, could one find them also in non-Sakya paintings?

Stoddard tentatively concludes that the key “flourishing garuda *torana*” should no longer be associated exclusively with the Sakya School.<sup>92</sup> She provisionally identified one *thangka*, in particular, with that *torana* (decorative backrest arch) as having a Drigung origin (Fig. 4.13). Although this *thangka* actually turns out to depict a lineage of the Drukpa Kagyü School, that, too, is evidence of a provenance that is not the Sakya School. (I discuss its style and lineage in more detail as Figure 5.3.) But it is not a clear case since it is not painted in a Beri style. This is a late Pāla painting in an eclectic or composite style, at best.

Figure 4.13 with its prominent Eastern-Indian multicolor border strip of alternating stylized blue and red lotus petals (or a similar strip of inlaid blue and red jewels) thus should be classified as in a Pāla style, though a relatively late one. But the presence of a Newar decorative backrest arch featuring *makaras* and other mythical animals with voluted tails behind the main figure did lead others, besides Stoddard, to be puzzled by its style, some considering the painting to embody “an eclectic blend of Nepalese and eastern Indian styles.”<sup>93</sup> I suspect that by about 1300 such seemingly Beri backrest-arch elements had long ago entered the artistic mainstream in Tibet and probably appeared in numerous late Pāla style paintings.

Kossak dates the painting to about 1350, though I would date it somewhat

[C]	b	1	2	3	4	7	5	6	so1	so2	so3
	ga1	d1								d2	so4
	ga2										so5
	ga3										so6
	ga4										so7
	ga5					8					9
	ga6										10
	ga7										11
	so8										12
	d3	d4		d5		d6			d7		P (13)



earlier, from about 1280 to 1310, taking its Drukpa Kagyü lineage into consideration. The structure of the painting, if it portrays a single, unbroken lineage, is shown in diagram [C].

The individual minor figures cannot be identified through inscriptions, and their iconography is at first sight confusing. But the picture becomes clearer when we identify and bracket out two standard groupings of Indian Buddhist masters: the Eight Great Adepts (abbreviated in the chart “ga”) and the Six Ornaments and Two Supremes (abbreviated “so”). Then the remaining Indian and Tibetan lineage masters are easier to identify as a lineage of the Drukpa Kagyü. Moreover, the iconography of guru number 9, Ling Repa, and number 10, Tsangpa Gyare, is unmistakable.<sup>94</sup> For chronological orientation, we should refer to Drukpa Kagyü lineage up to its twelfth generation of teachers:<sup>95</sup>

1. Vajradhara (rDo rje ‘chang)
2. Tilopa
3. Naropa
4. Marpa Lotsawa (Mar pa Lo tsā ba)
5. Milarepa (Mi la Ras pa)
6. Gampopa (sGam po pa, a.k.a. Dags po lha rje bSod nams rin chen, 1079–1153)
7. Phakmotrupa Dorje Gyalpo (Phag mo gru pa Khams pa rDo rje rgyal po, 1110–1170)
8. Ling Repa (Gling ras pa Padma rdo rje, 1128–1188)
9. Tsangpa Gyare (gTsang pa rGya ras Ye shes rdo rje, 1161–1211)
10. Önchen Repa Darma Sengge (dBon chen Ras pa Darma seng ge, 1177/8–1237)
11. Shönnu Sengge (gZhon nu seng ge, 1200–1266)
12. Nyima Sengge (dBon po Nyi ma seng ge, 1251–1287)

There is, however, a problem with interpreting the structure of this thangka as a single, unbroken lineage. The cen-

tral figure (guru number 8) must be, following a basic iconographic rule, the disciple of the guru who has been moved directly above his head, in this case number 7, Phagmotrupa. But another direct disciple of Phagmotrupa also appears in the painting, one guru later: number 9, Ling Repa, the founding guru of the Drukpa Kagyü. Three possible explanations occur to me. One is that the main figure may have been another key disciple of Phagmotrupa who was closely linked with the Drukpas. A second is that gurus 8 and 9 may both portray Ling Repa, once as a young monk and second as a venerable yogi-guru. A third possibility is that the planner of the painting may have broken the rules and placed a later guru as number 9, out of his usual order. None of the three possibilities is elegant or completely satisfying. Yet, to be on the safe side, we could qualify our dating of the patron accordingly to the thirteenth (or possibly twelfth) lineal generation, since the first two explanations would entail shortening the lineage by one generation.

A second painting from the same late Pāla-style workshop, but of a tantric deity, is Figure 4.14. It was dated in the same catalog to about 1200, i.e., one and a half century earlier than its sister painting.<sup>96</sup> The painting depicts as its main figure the wrathful deity Blue Acala. The close similarity of many details with those in painting number 30 (Fig. 4.13) leads me to suspect they were executed around the same time and possibly even by the same artist. The second catalog entry shows how difficult it is to date such paintings purely by style, but, luckily, the painting also portrays its lineal gurus.

It was commissioned for a lama of another tradition, the Sakya School, as can be recognized from the hats of one of the final three gurus. The final lama of the lineage can be counted as dating two generations after Sakya Pandita (with his distinctive red pundit’s hat and Mañjuśrī

hand-held emblems) and thus to have flourished in about 1300.<sup>97</sup> In any case, this painting can probably be safely dated to about 1300 to 1320, which supports the dating of Figure 4.13 that was reached through its Drukpa lineage.

## CONCLUSIONS

Previous scholars wrongly identified numerous Beri thangkas from the thirteenth through the fifteenth century as works of Sakya patronage. (Such wrong attributions also carried over occasionally even to later thangkas or to earlier Pāla-style paintings.)<sup>98</sup> What lessons does this teach? Stylistically, most of these paintings are identical with what contemporary Sakya lamas might have commissioned. But iconographically the earlier thangkas possess essential differences: the wrongly attributed thangkas never portray as key early lay lineage masters the three white-robed masters of Sakya—Sachen and his two sons (the *dkar po rnam gsum*)—followed by red-hatted Sakya Pandita. These four early founding masters of Sakya can usually be recognized at a glance, if they are present. The masters who were actually depicted differ in their iconography.

Thus it bears repeating: Not all early lay masters were from the Sakya School. If we find in a lineage immediately following an Indian pundit a long-haired Tibetan layman wearing a (often green) long-sleeved robe, the lay master could well be Dromtön (‘Brom ston), and his subsequent lineage would then be Kadampa. If the first long-haired Tibetan layman is succeeded by a cotton-clad yogi, the lay master would be Marpa the Translator, founder of the Marpa Kagyü. If he is followed by several similar-looking long-haired masters, the first long-haired layman might be Marpa still, but here followed by early masters from the Ngok (rNgog) family lineage of Kagyü tantric ritual specialists, beginning with Marpa’s disciple







Ngoktön (rNgog ston).

To avoid such mistakes in the future, we must attune ourselves more closely to the concrete details of the religious lineages portrayed. We should also not forget the diversity of styles and sub-styles that existed in the Early, Middle (Universal), and Later Beri periods. From the mid-fifteenth century onward, stylistic diversity was a fact among the Sakya, too. At least a few non-Ngorpa lamas of the Sakya School avidly patronized other styles, such as Gongkar Dorjedenpa (Gong dkar rDo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal 1432–1496), who supported Khyentse Chenmo (mKhyen brtse Chen mo) at Gongkar (Gong dkar) in Ü Province in the late fifteenth century. Even Ngorpa paintings may turn out to be more stylistically diverse than expected when investigated in detail.

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FIG. 4.14

Acala with Lineage

Ca. 1280–1310

29 ½ x 22 ⅞ in. (75 x 57.5 cm)

Private Swiss Collection

Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor

Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
no. 22.







DESPITE THE EFFORTS of previous scholars, the documentation of many Tibetan thangkas, including those in the Beri style, leaves something to be desired. Paintings in that style continue to appear in one catalog after another, though often without sufficient attention to their precise iconographic content, sectarian background, or dating. The widely disparate datings hazarded by some past experts led some scholars at one point to despair of ever reliably dating such thangkas, even to within a century or more.<sup>99</sup> And such problems are not unique to the Beri style.

Though not all of those problems can be addressed here, some progress has been made in recent years. A few key sites of Beri murals, for instance, are now better known, and art history being a cumulative body of knowledge, each careful contribution on single paintings, however small, is welcome. In this chapter, I will summarize some of the main stylistic features of Beri painting. Continuing the work of others, I would like to list here a few key features of Beri style, mainly from the Early and Middle (Universal) periods.

#### A CONVENIENT COMPARISON

To distinguish the Beri style more definitively, we need to establish in more detail its differences from preceding and subsequent styles. That is, we need to discern, first, how the style differed from

the Pāla style during the Early Beri period, and second, its key differences from the later, more Sinic styles, as they developed during the Later Beri. (The later differences can only be hinted at in this catalog, such as through a few final paintings in chapter 8.)<sup>100</sup>

To notice decisive differences between styles, it is certainly easier to compare paintings that have different styles but the same iconography. The closer their iconography, the better.<sup>101</sup> For instance, the key stylistic differences become clear when we compare Figures 5.1 and 5.2, two portraits with the same main subject, one in the Pāla style and one in the Beri.

Figure 5.1 portrays a great Kagyü lama, presumably Yazang Chöje Chö Mönlam (g.Ya' bzang Chos rje Chos smon lam, 1169–1233).<sup>102</sup> It dates to about the mid-thirteenth century and, like another published early portrait of the same master, is painted in a late Pāla style. The very similar face, especially lips, and identical iconography as fully ordained teacher make it seem likely that the main figure is Yazang Chöje and not one of his early successors at Yazang Monastery.<sup>103</sup>

The structure of this painting shown in diagram [A] is difficult to decipher until one realizes that its minor figures probably depict two lineages, one on the left and one on the right. The painting does not depict any patron, but he presumably belonged to generation 11, if the lineage is complete, and thus I assume that he flourished in about the mid-thirteenth century. Note that the pri-

mordial tantric Buddha who begins the lineage is here red Buddha Vajradharma (of the Cakrasamvara tantric cycle) instead of blue Vajradhara. I presume that the lineage is that of the successive lamas of Yazang Monastery, whose histories are sketched by Gö Lotsawa in his *Blue Annals*.<sup>104</sup>

7. Phagmotrupa
8. Kalden Yeshe Sengge (sKal Idan Yeshe seng ge) of Shara (Zhwa ra), (d. 1207)
9. Yazang Chöje Chö Mönlam (g.Ya' bzang Chos rje Chos smon lam, 1169–1233)
10. Rinchen Josay (Rin chen Jo sras, d. 1242)
11. Gyalpo Gedze Ö (rGyal po dGe mdzes 'od, d. 1280), who expanded the temple
12. Kharchuwa Chösam Ö (mKhar chu ba Chos bsam 'od, d. 1298)

The minor figures on the left side may depict a second lineage, one for Avalokiteśvara practice that passes through a dark-skinned, cotton-clad yogi.<sup>105</sup> Guru number 9b, the very distinctive dark-skinned cotton-clad yogi, or *repa*, can again hardly be anyone but Ling Repa.<sup>106</sup> He was a disciple of Phagmotrupa who founded the Drukpa Kagyü, but I assume one of his transmissions was commemorated here. Though I could not locate an exactly matching lineage, some transmissions for Avalokiteśvara practices begin with Buddha Amitābha (often called in Tibetan *sNang ba mtha' yas* instead of

Detail of Fig. 0.2





FIG. 5.1  
 Yazang Chöje with Two Lineages  
 Mid-13th century  
 20 ½ x 17 ⅞ in. (51.5 x 45.3 cm)  
 Private Collection  
 Literature: A. Mignucci 2001, fig. 6.

[A]	4b	3b	2b	1b	8	1	2	3
	5b							4
	6b							5
	7b			9				6
	8b							7
	9b							10
	d1							d2
	d3	d4	d5	d6	d7	d8	d9	d10

‘*Od dpag med*) and Avalokiteśvara.

We should notice, stylistically, the horizontal bands of inlaid jewels mixed with bands of natural stone in strips across the bottom of the painting below the main throne pedestal and at the very bottom. Note also the rainbowlike multi-colored outer body nimbus of the principal figure, which disappears in the Beri version.

Figure 5.2, I believe, likewise depicts Yazang Chöje as the main figure, surrounded by a somewhat simpler composition of lineal gurus and a few deities.<sup>107</sup> The similar lips and hairline and identical iconography of the main figure as in Figure 5.1 lead me to conclude that he, too, portrays the same great master.<sup>108</sup> There would be nothing unusual about portraying the founder of a monastery as main figure in a number of paintings, even generations after his passing.

Some elements of the background are so similar that the two paintings are clearly closely related as portraits, either based on the same model or directly copied, one from the other. Note the strikingly similar elements of the supporting throne such as the dark elephants and black-trimmed drapery in the center of the throne pedestal, below the central lamas’s lotus seat. On the sides of the backs of both thrones, unusual pleated cloths hang from ornate hooks. The nearly identical central lamas wear robes that are so similar that the same circular golden brocade designs shine prominently on both.

The structure of the painting seems to be as shown in diagram [B]. Again the red primordial Buddha, Vajradharma, begins the lineage. Most of the subsequent gurus are recognizable as the main Kagyü line of transmission down to Mila and Gampopa. Guru number 8 has been moved out of order, to appear above the head of the main figure, 9. I suspect that the last two lamas in the left-hand column (8b and 9b) were





FIG. 5.2  
 Yazang Chöje with Lineages  
 Second half of the 13th century  
 13 1/8 x 10 in. (33.3 x 25.5 cm)  
 Private Collection  
 Literature: A. Mignucci 2001, fig. 7.

[B]					
B1	1	8	2	3	
5				4	
6				7	
8b		9		10	
9b				11	
P(12?)	B2	d1	d1	d3	

added to include gurus from a lineage that included guru 8b, apparently Ling Repa. (The same dark-skinned, cotton-clad yogi appears as a guru in the left-hand column as in the preceding painting.)

Note again the presence of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as one of four minor deities in the bottom row. The additional master (9b) below Ling Repa may also indicate the passing of another generation. If, on the other hand, 9b is a normal lineage master of Yazang with no special link with Ling Repa, then he could be counted as guru 11 or 12, and the patron would have lived one generation later. Note that 9b and 11 appear much younger. In either case, the painting could be safely dated to the second half of the thirteenth century, probably to the period of Mongol (Yuan) occupation. Mignucci summarizes four key stylistic features that distinguish it from Figure 5.1:<sup>109</sup>

- [1.] The first striking feature ... is the absence of the lotus-petal decoration on the borders and throne. The outer borders are simply marked by a yellow band with a thin red line, and [2.] the throne, which maintains the structure of typical Pāla thrones, is decorated with delicate scrollwork in red on yellow. Both these features are normally associated with the Nepalese-influenced style. ... [3.] Additionally, the two *makaras*, whose elaborate tails frame the head of the main figure, are completely different from those we have seen in the other two paintings, and are representative of a style normally associated with Nepalese-influenced paintings. ... [4.] A fourth new feature in this portrait: the side figures are presented in the same space as the main figures [without borders to separate the top and side registers].



The Yazang thangkas are precious stylistic examples also because their lamas were not historical figures of national renown, with hundreds of disciples or numerous branch monasteries all over Tibet. We can therefore assume that their provenance is clear: they were probably commissioned and painted in the vicinity of Yazang Monastery, in Yarlung District of Ü Province.<sup>110</sup> The paintings attest to the fact that a Kagyü patron in Ü chose to commission an object of veneration in the new style during the Yuan period, two or three generations before the Pāla style died out. What is most striking to me, finally, is how similar the two sister traditions still were, though admittedly this may be an unusual case.

One way to interpret the great iconographic and stylistic similarity is that the second Yazang thangka may well have been made by a painter who had newly adopted or was still assimilating the new Beri elements. I doubt that he was a painter who was originally trained in a highly Nepalese Beri style. So many telling details of the painting have been taken over almost unchanged. Two prominent elements that were removed were two just behind the head of the main figure: the Pāla head nimbus of gold and alternating jewels and the stylized *makara* tail shown as a series of five bejeweled bumps. A third prominent element that disappeared was the mainly yellow outer body nimbus encircling the main figure, here almost rainbowlike in color through the inclusion of strips of green, blue, and magenta inside the thicker outer ring of light. Elsewhere, too, the Pāla golden strips inlaid with jewels of alternating colors have been avoided not just as outer edge of the whole painting but also as architectural details of the pedestal and shrine. The structure of the backrest shrine has been simplified through the removal of one plinth. Except for that, and the addition of a golden *makara* tail, many structural



FIG. 5.3 (detail from Fig. 4.13)  
Portrait of an Early Kagyü Master  
Ca. 1280–1310  
30 ¼ x 23 ¼ in. (77 x 59.7 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
(1991.304)  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
no. 30.

features of the throne were taken over intact, though with appropriate simplifications in their decoration. For example, the tips of the plinth ends are now monochrome, but their shape still includes the more prominent bump of the Pāla style. The dark blue backgrounds remain similar, though the flowers are strewn in a slightly different arrangement.

After such a relatively simple contrast (iconographically, at least), Figure 5.3 is worth looking at again as an example of a late and possibly mixed Pāla style, dating to about the same period as Figure 5.2. It prominently retains its Eastern-Indian multicolor border strip of alternating blue and red lotus petals (or inlaid blue and red jewels) and its chiefly yellow outer nimbus of radiant light of the main figure. (That nimbus is less rainbowlike than in Figure 5.1, with strips of white and yellow fading into red.) Note the large buttonlike ornament

on the edge of the green backrest cushion. Stone slabs are used as the base of the pedestal, though mixed with square yellow bricks. The undulating lotus stems around the minor figures originate below from a crossed vajra, a lotus flower, and a yellow vase. The background is black above. (The outer halo fringe here consists of a series of pointed jewels in a golden setting, not the usual series of gradually smaller jewel-filled bumps.)

The Newar throne back of mythical animals, including a prominent pair of *makaras* with voluted tails behind the main figure led some scholars to consider the painting an eclectic blend of Nepalese and Pāla styles.<sup>111</sup> Figure 5.2 confirms that such backrest arches, with gold ornately scrolling *makara* tails and snake-holding *garuda* above, were a hallmark of the Beri. But by about 1300 this key element had entered the artistic mainstream to such an extent that it was also employed in some Pāla-style paintings in central Tibet. That was no great heresy, for simpler versions of such *makara* tails were widespread (pan-Tibetan) motifs, and throne backs with elaborately voluted animal tails were already found in the eleventh century at such early sites as Kyangbu (Samada) and Drathang, long before the introduction of the Beri style.<sup>112</sup>

Compare the elaborate backrest of a buddha at Kyangbu (Samada) in Figure 5.4 with its voluted animal tails.<sup>113</sup> Similar throne backs were found at Yemar and Shalu in the early Yum Chenmo Chapel dating to the eleventh or twelfth century.<sup>114</sup> To get an idea how the motif may have begun as simpler coiling tails of geese, we can compare a painting from western Tibet dating to about the twelfth century.<sup>115</sup>

As a more typical, stylistically uniformly Pāla-style portrait of the twelfth century, let us take Figure 5.5. Notice the great similarities of many of its details, including the pedestal and drapery





FIG. 5.4  
Throne Back at Kyangbu (detail)  
Stone?  
11th century  
Photograph by Li Gotami Govinda  
Literature: Li Gotami Govinda 1979, p. 41.

on the front of and to the sides of the thrones, with the Yazang thangkas, early and late (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Here the three-lobed arch above each main figure is depicted as a shrine sheltered by a fringe of leafy trees or tree branches. The strips of red and blue inlaid jewels around the outer edges and as parts of the throne are obvious hallmarks of the style. The head nimbuses of the main figures built up of strips of gold and alternating blue and red gems are also an obvious characteristic, though the geese with a tail that usually provide a sort of second nimbus outside the first has here become a simplified single golden jewel with decorative leafy outgrowths.



FIG. 5.5  
Two Kadampa Masters  
Mid-12th century  
21 x 15 ½ in. (53.3 x 39.4 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
no. 11

#### PROMINENT FEATURES HELD IN COMMON WITH THE PĀLA STYLE

What were some of the most typical features of Beri painting? Two usual compositional features that the Beri of all periods had in common with the Eastern-Indian style were a balanced composition centered on the main figure and linear arrangement of the minor figures in rows or columns on all sides of the main figure. Iconographically, too, the two early traditions were originally very close.



## FEATURES MISSING IN THE PĀLA STYLE

Against that background of similarities, a few differences in format, coloring and decoration did stand out:

1. Squarer shape of painting. One obvious feature of the Early and Middle (Universal) Beri styles, but not typical of the Tibetan Eastern-Indian or Pāla style, is the almost square shape of its cloth supports.<sup>116</sup>
2. Thin yellow edges and dividing strips. In the Early and Middle (Universal) period, Beri painters sharpened the linear division of space by painting thin yellow strips along the outer edges and along some inner edges of the composition (Figs. 4.9, 5.2, and 6.19). This replaced the common border strips of alternating blue and red square or lotus-petal-shaped jewels inlaid in gold or yellow, which were hallmarks of the Pāla style, as in Figures 5.1, 5.3, and 6.22.
3. Red predominates. Painters of this style applied vermilion red to the backgrounds of the outer body nimbuses of main and minor figures. This repeated use of red in such nimbuses, as the color of monk robes, and in flames behind wrathful deities makes it predominate in the palette.
4. Dark blue background. Beri painters applied a dark indigo blue to whatever spaces were left as background, for instance, behind the thrones and backrests of peaceful figures. They often left this blue background relatively empty, except for stylized flowers or petals that were strewn about at regular intervals. They left more space in the background empty and did not pack it as full of divine figures as the Pāla-style artists did. (With the passing of time, dark blue becomes the second most prominent color in the palette.)

In Figure 6.19, red predomi-

nates in the body and head nimbuses of the main figures, and in the background sky of the rocky fringe and body aureoles of minor figures, and of course in the robes of buddhas and monks. Here that intense vermilion red contrasts with the medium blue background of the central five-lobed arch. Note the use of a darker blue (indigo?) background also below in the box where the patrons sit.

Many corresponding parts of the painting have been colored red and blue in a painting of the same theme in a Pāla style. (See Fig. 6.21.) So the difference of colors between the Indic styles was not as extreme as between the Beri and the more Sinic Menri of the late fifteenth or sixteenth century.<sup>117</sup>

5. Decorative scrollwork patterns on backrest cushions or nimbuses behind peaceful main figures. In paintings that depicted mainly peaceful deities, Beri painters avidly decorated the area behind peaceful principal deities with elaborate throne backs that included “*toranas*” (decorative backrest arches). For the entire structure behind the deity, modern Tibetans use the terms “throne back” (*khri rgyab*) or “backrest curtain” (*rgyab yol*), here in the more general sense of “backrest.”<sup>118</sup>

In a few early paintings (dating to about the late thirteenth century), painters reproduced beautiful textile patterns to depict large backrest pillows or cloth-covered backdrops where an inner body nimbus would be portrayed by much later painters (for early examples, see Figs. 6.7 and 6.8). More commonly artists also depicted the larger red body aureoles (*‘od ‘khor*) or similar inner backrests (*rgyab snye*) or back cushions (*rgyab ‘bol*) just behind peaceful minor figures, decorating the cushions with typical Newar scrollwork patterns or volutes (Tib. *pa ṭa ri mo*, see Fig.

6.4). Later Beri artists, when depicting lamas, often painted a small deep blue back cushion behind them, instead of the dark green back cushion decorated with scrollwork preferred in lama portraits of the Pāla style. With peaceful deities, they painted the back cushion a contrasting color: for example, red when the deity’s body was green, and vice versa. The contrasting color for lamas wearing red robes would normally have been green.

Head nimbuses could also be filled with decorative scrollwork (see Figs. 5.11, 5.12, and 5.14). A dense profusion of small medallions or roundels built up from repeated Newar scrollwork patterns became a hallmark of this style. In later centuries, even the dark blue backgrounds of the entire painting, which formerly were strewn with flowers or petals, could be packed with such scrollwork-filled roundels.

Figure 5.6 is a painted book cover decorated all over with scrollwork. The undulating lotus vines that encircle the four central deities emerge from a central vase. The foliate scrollwork patterns below emerge from the mouth of a *garuda* face. In Figure 5.7, the wooden cover of a Shaiva (Hindu) manuscript from Nepal, one finds some of the original Newar foliate roundels of scrollwork. Here, between volutes, eight-petaled lotuses alternate with non-Buddhist deities and a lingam. In Figure 5.8, very prominent lotus-stem loops and volutes fill the background in the top half of a wooden panel. The lotus stems of the two smaller deities (who are also forms of Vajrapāṇi) emerge from the side of the main deity’s lotus seat. The mantra below is for the wrathful bodhisattva Blue-clad Vajrapāṇi (Nilamabharadhara Vajrapāṇi; Tib. *Phyag na rdo rje Gos sngon can*),





FIG. 5.6  
Book Cover  
Ca. 15th century  
Painted wood  
11 x 27.63 x 1.5 in. (27.94 x 70.16 x  
3.81 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1996.35.1 (HAR 700011)



FIG. 5.7  
Covers of a Shaiva Manuscript  
Nepal; mid-15th century  
Painted wood  
2 1/8 x 23 1/4 in. (5.4 x 59.1 cm)  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Gift of  
Dr. and Mrs. P. Pal; M. 80.155.1a-b  
Literature: P. Pal 1985, no. P14, p. 210.





FIG. 5.8  
Vajrapāṇi and His Mantra  
Ca. 15th century  
Carved wood  
9 x 17.75 x 1.5 in. (22.86 x 45.08 x 3.81 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.629 (HAR 700005)

whom I presume to be the central figure. D. Klimburg-Salter in an article on the origin of Tibetan book cover decoration documented the Indian origin of the running vine motif in twelfth-century Tibetan book covers, finding a possible forerunner in the latest of three Gilgit book covers, one that dates to about the eighth or ninth century.<sup>119</sup>

Newar scrollwork decorations on painted mandalas alone are various enough to warrant a special study.<sup>120</sup> (See Figs. 5.9 and 5.10.) Figure 5.9 depicts scrollwork patterns from a mandala from the Vajrāvalī Cycle that was commissioned by Ngorchen at Ngor between 1429 and 1456. It was painted in Tibet by Newar artists. As examples

- of back cushions with Newar scrollwork, see Figures 5.11 and 5.12.
6. An arched temple niche or shrine featuring peaceful deities. Beri artists could portray peaceful main figures in an elaborate shrine (Skt. *gandhola*, Tib. *gtsang khang*). Such shrines originally could incorporate both a throne back of animal elements within and pillars and an arch without. Figure 5.13 illustrates an elaborate shrine with both a pillared arch and inner animal-tail decorative backrest arch elements. It was also possible to show a structurally simpler throne back, consisting of only an arch or animal-tail backrest elements.



FIG. 5.9 (detail of Fig. 8.6)  
Newar scrollwork on a mandala

- 6a. Arches featuring mythical animals with scrolling foliate tails. The artists could construct thone-back arches in a typical Newar way, featuring columns or other supporting elements to the right and left, atop which they depicted mythical animals (especially *makara*) with stylized tails of elaborate golden foliate whorls. Such shrines were often

FIG. 5.10  
Newar scrollwork on a Kālacakra Mandala  
15th century  
Musée Guimet, MA 5189  
Literature: G. Béguin 1995, p. 61, fig. 26 (catalog number 155).







FIG. 5.11  
Vairocana with Attendant Bodhisattvas  
Ca. 1260–1300  
20  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 16  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (51.7 x 42.7 cm)  
Collection of Lionel Fournier  
Literature: G. Béguin 1990, no. F.



FIG. 5.13  
Green Tārā  
1260–1290  
20  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 16  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (52.1 x 43 cm)  
Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from  
the J. H. Wade Fund (1970.156)  
Literature: P. Pal 1984, pl. 18; and S. Kossak  
and J.C. Singer 1998, no. 37.



FIG. 5.12 (detail of Fig. 8.19)  
Newar scrollwork in a body cushion and  
head nimbus



FIG. 5.14 (detail of Fig. 0.2)  
Elaborate backrest arch of mythological  
animals with complex golden foliate tails





FIG. 5.15  
The six ornaments of the throne back  
Illustration from a modern publication  
Literature: Krang Dbyi-sun et al. eds. 1985, *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* [Tibetan-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary], vol. 3, p. 3306.

considered typical elements in the Beri, though the motif itself is much older and more widespread. They also occur widely in western Tibet and in a few transitional late Pāla paintings of central Tibet from about 1300 to 1360. For a very elaborate backrest arch of mythical animals with complex golden foliate tails, see Figure 5.14.

A six-part throne back is documented in recent art manuals and other written sources, which call it “throne-back of six supports” (*khri rgyab drug* ‘gyogs). Its main parts, from top to bottom are: 1) *garuda* (*bya khyung*), 2) female water spirit, *klu mo* (alternatively, *naga* or water spirit child, *klu phrug*), 3) water monster or *makara* (*chu srin*), 4) small boy (*bu chung*), 5) spotted antelope (*kṛṣṇa sārā*; alternatively *sha*



FIG. 5.16  
Buddha  
Northern Chapel (Lha khang byang), Zhal yas khang, Serkhang Temple, Shalu  
14th century  
Height of Buddha with lotus seat, 18 7/8 in. (48 cm); height with hammered copper aureole, 26 3/8 in. (67.5 cm).  
Literature: U. von Schroeder 2001, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, vol. 2, *Tibet and China*, no. 231A, p. 962.  
Photograph by U. von Schroeder 1993

*ra bha*, the eight-footed king of deer, or *bse kha sgo*), and 6) elephant (*glang chen*). One name applied to it, throne-back of six supports, may be erroneous. The later translated version of a large Tibetan-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary emended that Tibetan entry to read “the six ornaments of the throne backrest” (*khri rgyab rgyan drug*), which is correct. (For those six ornaments, see Fig. 5.15.)

Different variations existed for depicting throne backs. An early variation propounded by followers of Jigten Sumgön of Drigung in the thirteenth century upheld a tradition of four ornaments (*rgyan bzhi*)—and not six—of the throne back: 1) *garuda* (*bya khyung*), 2) *makara*, sea monster (*chu srin*), 3) antelope (*ri dwags*), and 4) elephant (*glang*

*chen*). They also listed the lion (*seng ge*) as a fifth animal (and as a symbolic antidote to the fifth defiling emotion, or *kleśa*), but that last animal was evidently counted part of the throne base and not an element of the throne back.

The same large Tibetan-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary, when defining the related term “sixfold supported throne” (*khri drug* ‘gyogs), lists six different animals: 1) lion (*seng ge*), 2) elephant (*glang chen*), 3) magical horse (*rta mchog*, something like Pegasus), 4) peacock (*rma bya*), 5) the fabulous part-human *cīvamcivaka* bird (*shang shang* or *shangs shangs*), and 6) human athlete (*gyad gyi mi*). This group may be the mythical animals (with one special type of human) that appear in the pedestal of the throne, not in the throne backrest.

Complicated backrest arches (sometimes called *toranas*) also featured on some old statues, though many were lost when statues were moved from their original location. Figure 5.16 exemplifies a Buddha sculpture, complete with (here mostly hidden) back cushion and head nimbus and outer circle of light, or aureole. Above the slated supporting bars we find stubby-tailed *makaras*, half-human half-snake *nagas* (serpent deities), and a standing *garuda*. Other examples of elaborate aureoles crafted of metal are Figures 5.17 and 5.18.

The symbolism of the entire throne back (*khri rgyab*) is said to be complete in Figure 5.17 with five auspicious animals, and here one finds elephants, leogryphs, *makaras*, *nagas*, and a *garuda*.<sup>121</sup> It is interesting to notice the presence of lotuses within the loops formed by lotus stalks in the center, which would have been concealed from view if the missing sculpture were present. (An





FIG. 5.17  
Elaborate backrest and body nimbus  
(Prabha-mandala)  
Nepal; 14th century  
Hammered gilt copper  
Height: 12 1/8 in. (30.8 cm.)  
Newark Museum Golden Anniversary Gift  
of a Group of Present and Past Staff Mem-  
bers. 1959. 59.346  
Literature: S. Kramrisch 1964, no. 48; V.  
Reynolds et al. 1986, no. S17.

almost identical gilt copper body  
nimbus survives in Seattle.)<sup>122</sup>

Figure 5.18 depicts an even  
more elaborate backrest and body  
nimbus behind a standing Tārā. (The  
backrest was made in Tibet for an  
earlier Nepalese sculpture.)<sup>123</sup> The  
animals above the bar are the same  
as in the previous two figures, but  
there seems to be a third animal with  
foliate tail above the elephants and  
tigers, which I can make out in the  
available photograph on the right  
side below the elbow of the goddess.  
This backrest arch has an additional  
ornament of outer looping floral  
vines that grow as the tails of two  
bird-men (*shangs shangs*) below,  
who perch next to the elephants.

The temple shrine or niche that  
supported the elaborate animal-tail  
arches above a peaceful deity or guru

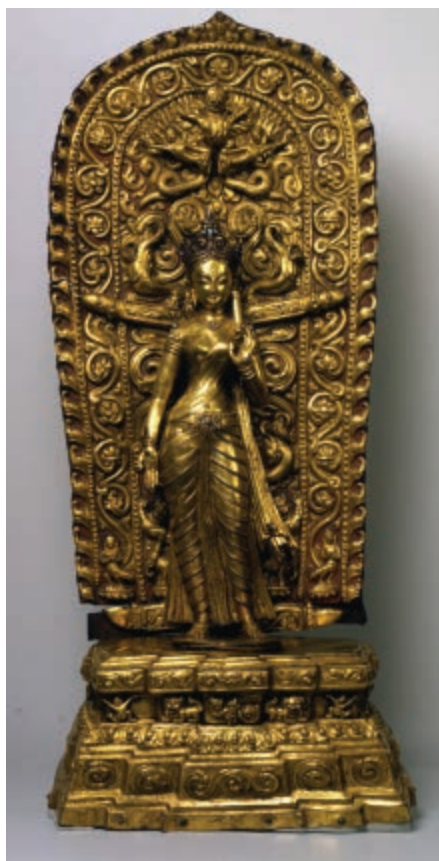


FIG. 5.18  
Standing Tārā  
Goddess: Nepal, 10th–12th century; throne  
and backrest: Tibet, 15th century or later  
Gilt copper  
Nimbus with throne, height: 28 in. (71.2  
cm)  
Newark Museum, Purchase 1920 Albert L.  
Shelton collection. 20.453  
Literature: S. Kramrisch 1964, no. 39; V.  
Reynolds et al. 1986, no. S15.

could be slightly simpler in the Beri,  
as in Figure 5.19, having just one  
main lintel or horizontal beam (in-  
stead of two beams, as in many Pāla  
paintings). The lintel was usually  
placed at about the level of the  
shoulders or neck of the main figure.  
Whatever the number of such lintels,  
their projecting ends were pointed  
and turned up, like the ends of some  
other horizontal architectural mem-  
bers on the throne pedestal and



FIG. 5.19 (detail of Fig. 6.10)  
Beri (Newar) lintel ends



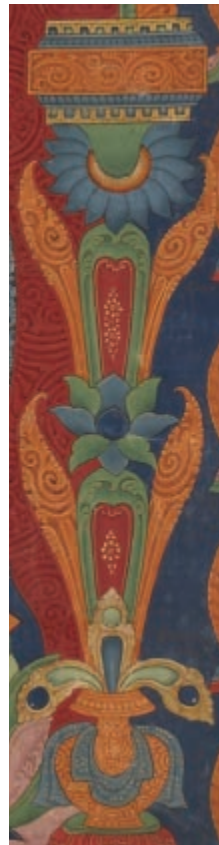
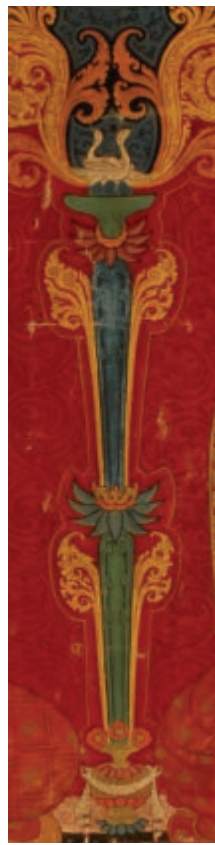
Fig. 5.20 (detail of Fig. 5.1)  
Pāla lintel ends

back.<sup>124</sup> (Figure 5.20 shows the cor-  
responding lintel ends from a Pāla-  
style painting.)

6b. The simplified shrine or niche of a  
peaceful deity could consist of just a  
gate made of pillars with rounded  
arches. This type of shrine could be  
constructed of a more or less elabo-  
rate pair of pillars topped by a three-  
or five-lobed golden ornamental  
arch, with the central lobe of the arch  
above the head nimbus. The Early  
Beri painters shared such arches with  
the older Eastern-Indian style. In the  
Later Beri, such shrines became a  
peculiarity of that particular style  
alone.

Artists constructed the pillars of  
conventionally determined elements,  
beginning at the bottom with a vase.





(LEFT) FIG. 5.21 (detail of Fig. 6.13)  
Vase-based lotus pillar at Shalu

(CENTER) FIG. 5.22 (detail of Fig. 7.4)  
Vase-based lotus pillar

(RIGHT) FIG. 5.23 (detail of Fig. 8.19)  
Vase-based lotus pillar

Out of the vase grew a pillar of one, two, or three vegetal parts, each part originally representing the segment of a lotus stalk or floral vine, though later so stylized or ornate that it is no longer recognizable as such. The pillar culminates with a lotus capital, which supports a bracket, atop which stands the arch or other backrest elements. (Figs. 5.21, 5.22 and 5.23 depict details of earlier and later pillars.) Figure 5.24 conveys in relief the role of decorative arch-supporting pillars in a shrine of many deities. Here only the central figure, a removable statue, is missing.

7. Paintings in an Early Beri style usually portrayed the outer edges of head nimbuses of peaceful deities and gurus with thinner, often monochrome bands on the inside and a thicker golden band of flame on the outside. (See Figs. 5.2, 5.26, and 6.9.) They almost never depicted such head nimbuses after the Pāla manner, with a thicker multicolor band built up of patches of gold alternating with thick strips of red and blue jewels (as in Figs. 5.1, 5.5 and 5.25).



FIG. 5.24  
Portable Shrine  
Nepal; 15th or 16th century  
Carved wood, traces of paint and gilding  
16 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 16 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in (42.6 x 43 cm)  
Victoria and Albert Museum, IM.I.-1938  
Literature: J. Lowry 1973, no. 48; Béguin 1977, no. 129.





FIG. 5.25  
Amoghasiddhi  
1200–1250  
27 1/8 x 21 1/4 in. (68.8 x 54 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1991.74)  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
pl. 23c.

8. Robes of peaceful deities are longer and cover the knees. Beri artists typically depicted the knees of peaceful figures (Sambhogakāya buddhas, bodhisattvas, and peaceful goddesses) covered by their lower robes. By contrast, the Pāla style depicted deities with bare knees and thighs, as in Figure 1.25.

The question of whether knees were covered or not was complicated

by the fact that many peaceful divinities were depicted in the Pāla style, wearing lower robes (*dhotis*) of thin, sheer cotton. Thus, though the knees and thighs were still visible, they were technically covered. Some Early Beri painters knew and imitated the effect of diaphanous lower robes, but after some time they switched to robes that both covered and concealed the knees.

As an example of a standing bodhisattva with knees not covered by a lower robe painted in the Pāla style, see Figure 5.25.

9. Head ornaments of peaceful deities. In Early Beri paintings, not only were the knees covered more modestly, but also in the headdresses of



FIG. 5.26 (detail of Figure 6.3)  
Tiara and earrings

the same peaceful deities, large central jewels feature more prominently in the golden crowns or tiaras that decorate their heads. (See Fig. 5.26.) The golden jewel settings, or fleurons, are shaped like teardrops, and they are no longer sharply triangular or conical as in Eastern-Indian art (compare Figs. 1.25 and 5.25).

10. Earrings of peaceful deities. In some very Early Beri thangkas, the earrings of peaceful divinities hang higher, parallel to the plane of the picture as if the viewer were looking straight through the holes (as in Fig. 5.26). The earrings no longer hang at an angle, as if resting against the neck or shoulders, with their sides visible and the stretched earlobes visible at the bottom, as is common in many Pāla paintings. In some Early Beri paintings, the deities seem to wear a smaller earring of a new type, though this feature does not occur consistently in later periods.<sup>125</sup>
11. Placement of minor figures. In the early and middle periods of the Beri, its artists arranged the individual minor figures in a strictly linear way around the main figure, placing





FIG. 5.28 (detail of Fig. 7.30)  
Detail of lotus-stem roundels from underneath the throne of the principal figure



FIG. 5.27 (detail of Fig. 6.16)  
Minor figures placed within a row of circular entwined lotus stems. Here the deities alternate in the roundels with flowers of various types and colors



smaller guru figures or deities within small arches or within the circles formed from entwined lotus stems or other similar convoluted vines. (See Figs. 5.29, 6.24, 7.5, 7.7, and 7.8.)

Minor offering deities and other decorative elements also could be portrayed within circular frames consisting of intertwining lotus vines, an Indian motif also common in Pāla painting (see Figs. 5.27 and 5.28). In Figure 5.29, the lotus shoots may be still aquatic. The numerous darker shoots seem to be those that are still submerged under the surface of the lotus pond. The lighter pastel buds would in that case be those that push above the water's surface. The entire vine grows out of the golden pot below, which stands on a golden crossed vajra (ritual scepter). Figures 5.30 and 5.31 give an idea of earlier Pāla treatments of the motif. Figure 5.31 depicts as many as fifteen roundels filled with five different flower types.

In some very fine works, each minor figure inhabited its own diminutive shrine or arched niche (Tib. *sgo khyim*). (See Figs. 5.32 and

FIG. 5.29  
Milarepa with Lineage  
1250–1300  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2002.24.5 (HAR 65121)





FIG. 5.30 (detail of Fig. 4.1)



FIG. 5.31  
Footprints in early intertwining vines filled  
with flowers  
Ca. 12th century  
Pigments on silk; 18 ½ x 21 ¾ in.  
(47 x 55 cm)  
Private Swiss Collection

FIG. 5.32 (detail of Fig. 8.15)  
Minor figures in small arched niches



FIG. 5.33 (detail of Fig. 7.1, upper left)  
Minor figures in small arched niches

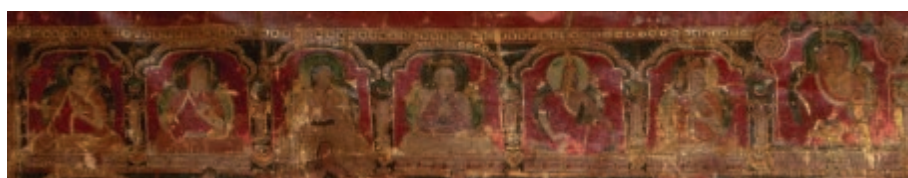






FIG. 5.34 (detail of Fig. 3.4)  
Four-armed Mahākāla, with smooth-edged flames



Fig. 5.35  
Mahākāla Panjarnātha (detail), with dentate edges of flames  
Collection of Shelley and Donald Rubin  
P1994.21.6 (HAR 135)

5.33.) Often, however, the artists depicted minor figures sitting in a row, one adjoining the next, without an arch above each one.

12. Jagged flames behind wrathful deities. Beri painters decorated the

edges of the masses of flames behind wrathful figures with a series of flame designs (*me ris*), each design representing a mass of fire comprising several smaller tongues of flame. Seen from a distance, each stylized mass of flame, which could number from fifteen to as many as thirty, looked like a separate large dentate tongue in the jagged outer edge of the flame.

Pāla-style painters, by contrast, depicted masses of flames as relatively solid fields of red with smoother edges. Figure 5.34 illustrates masses of flames with smooth borders, as in the Pāla style. I believe this is an Early Beri painting and that the flames retain the earlier Pāla type.

The designs on the edges of the flames in Figure 5.35 are typical of many wrathful figures in the Beri style. The painting also features Newar scrollwork in the black background behind the flames. Although not precisely datable by internal evidence, the painting can still be used to exemplify this prominent stylistic



FIG. 5.36  
Deities from the Mandala of Trailokyavijaya  
1427–1442  
Gyantse, Palkhor Stupa, Chapel 1Eb  
Literature: F. Ricca 1997, fig. 43.  
Photograph by Franco Ricca

feature. It portrays three lamas of the Sakya School above. If the painting really dates to the mid-fifteenth century, which seems possible (M. Rhie dated it so), the three lamas might be Ngorchon and two of his chief successors, though inscriptions are lacking. (Some dentate flames were already present at Shalu in the 1330s, for instance in Fig. 6.14, left side.)

The individual fire patterns could be colored the same red or another color, such as yellow or gold. Sometimes painters used alternating pastel colors. Figure 5.36 illustrates four deities surrounded by flames with edges that have tongues of contrasting colors.

13. Patrons with offerings. Beri-style offerings differ from those in the Pāla style, and several different types can be discerned. H. Stoddard describes the typical cluster of offerings of the Pāla style as being “arranged with a special stand, with two crossed fly whisks, surmounted by a book and a stupa with a small parasol on top.”<sup>126</sup> In Beri paintings, she records two other types of offerings: “(a) in





FIG. 5.37 (detail of Fig. 6.19)  
Early Beri depiction of patrons with offerings (mid-fourteenth century)



FIG. 5.38 (detail of Fig. 5.13)  
Example of an elaborate pedestal (late thirteenth century)



FIG. 5.39 (detail of Fig. 6.25)  
Example of an arched portal in a Beri mandala

bowls and tall pots, placed in long horizontal rows on an altar, or on tripod stands; or (b) in small round bowls on a tall offering stand with branches rising on either side of the central stem.”<sup>127</sup>

14. Architectural details. Important differences can be noted when comparing Pāla and Beri throne backs of peaceful deities (see Figs. 5.19 and 5.20). But we should take into account the ends of all horizontal architectural members. J. Huntington mentioned the turned up, pointed tips of horizontal members on the throne pedestals and similar architectural features.<sup>128</sup> (He illustrated the Nepali and Pāla conventions in his Fig. 57.)

H. Stoddard also mentioned a few significant details of the thrones and pedestal draperies.<sup>129</sup>

Another related architectural feature to note in paintings is the arched portal (Tib. *rta babs*, Skt. *torāṇa*) of the celestial mansion (Tib. *zhal yas khang*). (See Fig. 5.39.) Mandalas portray four such fully developed portals, one in each direction. They include a complicated gate superstructure of arched pediments, usually built up of four or eleven architectural layers or pediment bands (*rta babs kyi snam bu*).<sup>130</sup> The top gate in a painted mandala is easy to understand since it is depicted from the side, unlike most

other elements of a mandala, which are seen from above or from other perspectives.<sup>131</sup>

Though not a complete listing, these stylistic features may serve as a starting point for investigating individual paintings. The analysis of Tibetan painting styles thus involves the comparison of such decorative details as throne pedestals, back cushions (or flames), nimbuses, backgrounds, and the dress and ornaments of the figures portrayed. The stylistic analysis will be effective, moreover, only if we compare the same decorative elements of the same iconographic class of deity.







IN THIS CHAPTER and the following two, I would like to sketch the historical development of the Beri style, beginning with a summary of its main phases. The Beri existed in Tibet for more than four centuries, and we can discern three main periods of its history:<sup>132</sup>

1. Early Beri, circa 1180s–1350s
2. Beri as a Universal Tibetan Style (Middle Beri), circa 1360s–1450s
3. Later Beri, circa 1460s–1600

#### 1. THE EARLY BERI, 1180S–1350S

The period of the Early Beri style can be divided into two subperiods: the Pre-Yuan (circa 1180s–1250s) and the Sakya/Yuan (circa 1260s–1350s). The first began in the last decades of the twelfth century. Shortly thereafter, in 1203, Nepal found itself to be one of the few surviving centers of Indian Buddhist art, after Turkic raiders destroyed the great Buddhist monasteries in Bihar and Bengal. The second subperiod lasted about a century (circa 1260s–1350s) and coincided roughly with the time of Sakya political rule of Tibet under the Mongol Yuan emperors. During the entire Early Beri period, the Beri coexisted in Tibet with the Eastern-Indian style.

#### 2. THE BERI AS A UNIVERSAL STYLE, 1360S–1450S

At the start of the next period, the previously widespread Eastern-Indian style

disappeared, and the Beri style became the sole style of Tibetan painting.<sup>133</sup> Ironically, this century-long period of the Beri's universal adoption began not during the Yuan-supported Sakya rule, but when the Sakya government was overthrown and the new Phagmotru government begun. (The tottering Yuan dynasty collapsed in China for good in 1368.) This period saw several religious reversals for the Sakya School and its lamas, when some of the most brilliant scholiasts trained by the outstanding Sakyapa reviver of Madhyamaka studies, Rendawa—including the masters Tsongkhapa and Gyaltsab Darma Rinchen—left the Sakya Order to found a reformed New Kadampa (Geluk) Order, attracting many followers and patrons. But by the middle of this period, lamas of the Sakya School also made fervent efforts to renew their own monastic and religious life from within, led most prominently by the illustrious monk and tantric guru Ngorchen.

#### 3. THE LATER BERI, CIRCA 1460S–1600

The period of the Later Beri saw the establishment of the three main later Tibetan painting styles (Menri, Khyenri, and Gardri), though the Beri style continued to be commissioned in a few locations such as Ngor and Guge, and by some Karma Kagyü patrons, all of whom adhered to the old tradition despite the increasing popularity of the new Ming-court-inspired aesthetic. By

the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the new styles established by Menthangpa and Khyentse Chenmo found avid support in many parts of Tibet. Many followers of the Geluk Order apparently abandoned the Beri style in the mid- or late fifteenth century, and I suspect they did this not just on aesthetic grounds. The new style may also have been in part an expression of their wider search for a new and separate institutional identity, as a result of the wider doctrinal and institutional divisions that they had encouraged already in the 1430s and 1440s. Within the Sakya School, the lamas based at Gongkar in Ü Province were quick to adhere to one of the new styles from the 1460s onward.

#### 1a. The Pre-Sakya/Yuan Period (circa 1180s–1250s)

The Beri began to come into its own as a style in about the last two decades of the twelfth century, shortly before the destruction in 1203 of the Buddhist monasteries of Bihar and Bengal. Figure 6.3 is one of the earliest documented examples of a Beri style. Originally belonging to a set of five thangkas depicting the Tathāgatas or Jinas of the Five Buddha Races (*rgyal ba rigs lnga*), it was the fifth and last painting of the set, portraying as its main figure the green Tathāgata Amoghasiddhi. As discussed in chapter 4 (Fig. 4.3a-b), S. Kossak identified this as the earliest known Newar painting that possesses a proba-

Detail of Fig. 6.6



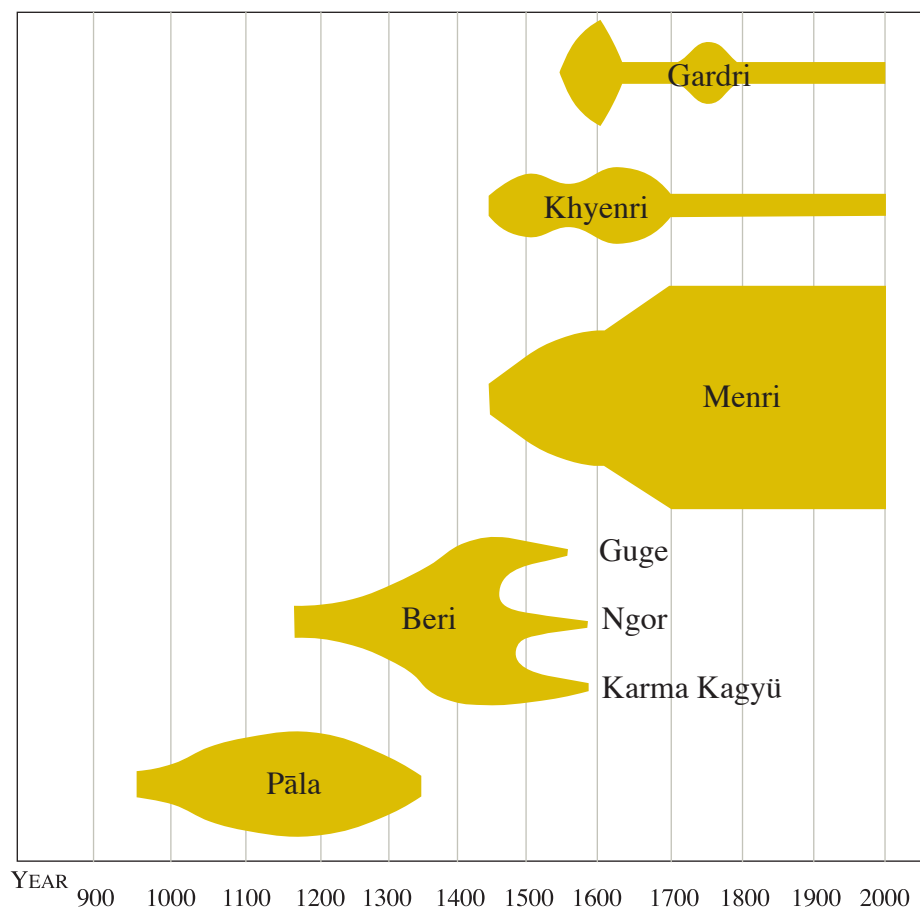


FIG. 6.1  
An illustration of the five principal painting styles in Tibet. The width of each bar represents the relative number of paintings commissioned from the 10th through 20th century.

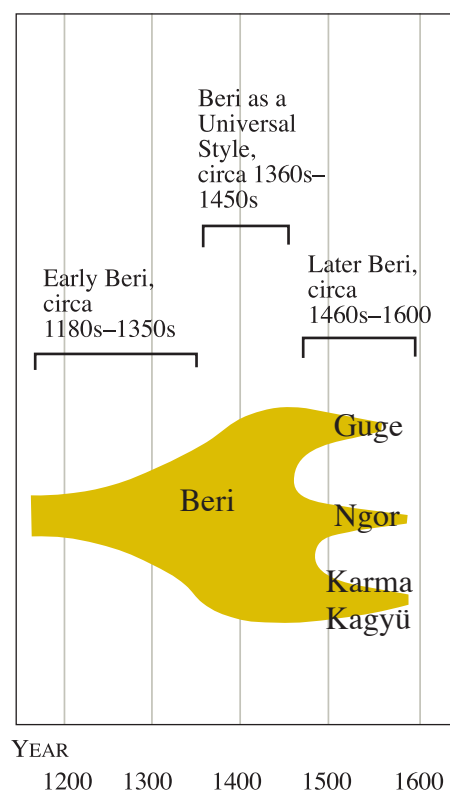


FIG. 6.2  
Periods of the Beri Style

ble connection with Sakya. It boasts amazingly detailed workmanship, and some of the Newar scrollwork that covers it is so fine and dense that it seems at first glance to be painted with a solid coat of color. S. Kossak 1998 and then D. Bangdel 2003 (in John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel 2003, *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art*), have carefully described the painting's most salient stylistic features.<sup>134</sup>

Figure 6.4 depicts a detail of a manuscript cover that is another early example of the Beri style. (The entire side was presented as Fig. 4.8.) Its inner sides have been painted with depictions of the goddess Prajñāpāramitā and several minor figures. M. Rhie noted it as an example of early Newar style, and she presciently dated it to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.<sup>135</sup> The presence of lineal gurus confirms this dating, allowing it to be narrowed a little bit further. The lineage begins with Atiśa and Dromtön and continues several generations with Kadampa teachers. I would, therefore, date it to approximately 1200 to 1225.

The Beri stylistic elements that this painting possesses include the (now faint) lac-dye scrollwork in the red area outside the main goddess's nimbuses but within her backrest arch. The blue, white-outlined back cushion and green head nimbus both have been beautified through golden decorative scrollwork. Lac-dye scrollwork details, also now faded, can be discerned in the red outer body nimbuses of minor deities to her right and left. The lac dye has altered more than other colors because, as an organic dye or lake, it is less stable than stone pigments. The painter has filled some back body nimbuses of the minor figures with textile designs.

Four animals form the throne back: elephant, leogryph, *makara*, and *garuda*. The lion supports the pedestal below. The field behind the backrest arch of the central goddess is draped with a broad





FIG. 6.3  
Amoghasiddhi  
1158–1182  
15 ½ x 12 ¼ in. (39.5 x 31 cm)  
Philadelphia Museum of Art; Stella  
Kramrisch Collection, 1994.148.609  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
pl. 36c; and J. Huntington and D. Bangdel  
2003, p. 96.

FIG. 6.4 (detail of Fig. 4.8)



red hanging curtain, which is ornamented to the right and left with decorations resembling tassels. Note also the two white shields beneath the lotus seats of the two standing accompanying deities.

Figure 6.5 is a detail of Figure 4.9, which has been discussed in chapter 4 as an early painting that was wrongly identified as from the Sakya School. It actually depicts a great Buddhist master of a still-undetermined Kagyü School with his lineage and one main disciple. The main figure, guru number 8 in the chart to Figure 4.9, was probably a major disciple of Phagmotrupa (Phag mo gru pa), guru number 7. The lay patron (P) seems to belong to generation 9, though possibly he was also a disciple of number 9.

Since the main figure (number 8) flourished in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, the painting can be conservatively dated to the first decades of the thirteenth century. It can accordingly be considered an example of a very early Beri style. Certainly its style was not the well-known Pāla style commonly patronized by Taklung Kagyü (sTag lung bKa' brgyud) patrons in the same period.

The animals in its throne back are the same as those in Figure 6.4, but the *garuda* here is not just a face but appears





FIG. 6.5 (detail of Figure 4.9)  
Kagyü Master with Lineage and Disciple

in full form: squatting, beaked, with hands held up. The *naga* youths beneath him are obviously *nagas* judging from the snake hoods behind their heads and the long coiling snake tails emerging from their bodies.

Figure 6.6 is one of the earliest indisputable pieces of Sakya art in a Beri style, though it is about two generations later than Figure 6.3 and about a generation later than Figure 6.4. It portrays Virupa surrounded by the eighty great adepts of India. The prominent placement of Virupa is something that we could expect in art of the Sakya School, since he was the first great human guru credited with teaching their revered Path with Its Fruit instructions. The ordering of the smaller adepts follows a sequence otherwise known only from a list in the writings of Butön (Bu ston Rin chen grub, 1290–1364).<sup>136</sup> Thus both the Sakya commissioner of this work and Butön knew and followed a similar but now scarcely known tradition for enumerating the great adepts.

Besides the presence of Virupa, less circumstantial evidence of a link with Sakya is provided by a brief inscription on the back, which states that



the painting had been consecrated by Sakya Pandita (1182–1251). Though we have no way of knowing who added this inscription or when, its assertion of a link with the fourth founding master of Sakya can not be dismissed offhand.

Significant Early Beri features of this painting include its nearly square shape and the alternating red and blue color in the background of checkerboard squares, where the minor figures have been placed. The minor adepts include a number of ordained monks. They illustrate well how Indian monks (and their robes) were portrayed in standing, seated, and kneeling postures. Red Newar scrollwork is visible in the red field behind the main figure. The trees above the upper outcropping of rocks are round, and they are surrounded by strange stylized trefoil clouds. (The same trilobed clouds serve in some other

FIG. 6.6  
Virupa and the Great Adepts  
1230–1250  
22 x 19 5/8 in. (55.9 x 49.8 cm)  
The Kronos Collections  
Literature: J.C. Singer 1994 fig. 23;  
S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998, no. 35;  
P. Pal et al. 2003, no. 129; and R. Linrothe  
ed. 2006, no. 26.

Newar paintings as sky vehicles for minor gods.) Virupa's "lotus seat" here is actually made of stylized square blocks of colored rocks.<sup>137</sup>

Thus some very early thangkas in the Beri style demonstrate religious links with Sakya and its masters. Historically and geographically, a connection was almost inevitable, given the relative proximity of Sakya (in western Tsang) to the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal and the fact that after 1203, Nepal survived as one of



the two last remaining islands of Indian Buddhist culture near the Himalayas (the other being distant Kashmir).

### *1b. The Sakya/Yuan Period (circa 1260s–1350s)*

The second half of the Early Beri period spanned roughly from the 1260s to the 1350s, about the time of Sakya political rule of Tibet under the Mongol Yuan emperors. During this period, the Beri co-existed with the Eastern-Indian style in Tibet. Two of the most important surviving Beri murals of this period are those at the cave temples of Luri in Mustang and at Shalu Monastery close to Shigatse in central Tsang Province.

#### *Murals from the Late Thirteenth Century at Luri*

The cave murals of Luri (or Lori) in eastern Lo Mustang (Figs 6.7–6.9) exemplify a Beri style of the late thirteenth century.<sup>138</sup> This cave temple could well date to between 1265 and 1280, the period of Chögyal Phakpa's reign. That would agree with the presence of Phakpa's uncle, Sakya Pandita, as the latest lama whom I could identify, based on his iconography, in the murals of the inner room (see Fig. 6.7). (If later lamas do turn up, the dating will have to be moved forward accordingly.)

In an article on the style of the Luri murals, H. Neumann dated them to between 1262 and 1306, noting that their styles lacked any sign of Chinese or Yuan influence.<sup>139</sup> This was slightly earlier than his previous conservative dating to not later than the early fourteenth century.<sup>140</sup> I agree with that dating, but have yet to confirm it through identifying the gurus pictured in the inner temple.<sup>141</sup>

The early years of Sakya and Yuan rule were very eventful politically for the Himalayan district of Lo Mustang

(Glo bo), because the neighboring Tibetan kingdom of Gungthang, which was ruled by the relatives and protégés of the Sakya rulers, then expanded its domain westward and took control of Mustang with Mongol help. At this time, the kingdom of Jumla, to the southwest, lost control of Mustang, and the Gungthang king built a number of important fortresses to support the rule of the new conquests. The Luri murals seem to date to this period of the Sakya-supported expansion of Gungthang, making them some of the oldest anywhere in modern-day Nepal.

In Figure 6.7 the gurus above Sakya Pandita, who have long hair and wear white inner robes, are presumably his grandfather, Sachen, and his two illustrious uncles.<sup>142</sup> In the archaic jewels and curtains in the throne back behind Sakya Pandita as main figure, we can clearly see both a white back cushion (*rgyab 'bol*) and decorative corners at his shoulder that include back curtains (*rgyab yol*). Note also the minor celestial deities who worship him from perches high in the sky. They sit on stylized clouds with a distinctive trilobate shape, each lobe made of leafy Newar scrollwork, a feature also found in Figure 6.6 and in at least one early fourteenth-century mural of the Kanjur Lhakhang of Shalu.<sup>143</sup>

In Figure 6.8 we see behind the main figure some of the same decorative elements again, here beautifying the throne back of a buddha. (The orange pointed corners seem to be ornamental fleurons, here not covered with a curtain.) The fine Newari facial features of this buddha are beautifully done. Note the archaic jewels at the top edge of the backrest and also the prominent textile designs just behind this buddha where Newar scrollwork would be expected in many Beri paintings of subsequent periods. (Still later, in non-Beri paintings from about the sixteenth century on, that position would usually be filled with golden rays of light.)



FIG. 6.7  
Sakya Pandita  
1265–1280  
Inner room, Luri, Mustang  
Photograph by Helmut Neumann  
Literature: H. Neumann 1997, fig. 26.

Figure 6.9, a detail portraying the head of Buddha Vajradhara, the central main figure of this side of the inner cave temple's room, again includes fine Newar facial features and a bodhisattva's typical ornamentation. The bodhisattva wears earrings of two different shapes, both of which hang to the edge of his shoulders in such a way that both holes can be seen through. Note also the prominent round jewels set within three teardrop-shaped golden jewel settings (or fleurons) in the stylized royal tiara.

#### *An Early Sakya-Period Thangka with No Lineage*

This extraordinary portrait of Green Tārā (Fig. 6.10) exemplifies some of the finest painting in Tibet during the mid-to late thirteenth century. It is a good





FIG. 6.8  
Buddha with Monk Attendants  
1265–1280  
Inner room, Luri, Mustang  
Photograph by Thomas Laird



FIG. 6.9  
Head of Vajradhara  
1265–1280  
Luri, Mustang  
Photograph by Helmut Neumann  
Literature: H. Neumann 1997, fig. 28.

example of the origin of the background as a small shrine or temple (*gandhola*) with both conventions of arches. In addition to the multi-animal backrest arch, it possesses a five-lobed arch, showing that both may occur together.

It has been described at length as a composite Pāla/Beri style by P. Pal, J. Huntington, and S. Kossak. As Kossak wrote:<sup>144</sup>

In many ways this masterpiece embodies but also transcends the most salient characteristics of the Nepalese style. Its small scale, exuberant detail, elaborate *torana*, throne elements with upturned ends, and the stylized physiognomy of the main deity indicate that it epitomizes the Nepalese tradition. All of these elements can be seen in a series of Tathāgatas, probably commissioned by a Sakya hierarchy (catalog number 36a-c). At the same time, the elaborate multi-story shrine with five-lobed opening and the throne base with stylized elephants and lions reflect familiarity with various elements associated with either the Indian Bengali style or the Bengali-inspired version of it. Throughout, the drawing is more restrained than that of related Nepalese works (compare the foliate tails of the *makaras* in the backrest arch or the animated beasts with the same elements in the Tathāgatas) but freer and livelier than that of contemporaneous Tibetan models (catalog numbers 24 and 25). Neither source prepares one for the sheer brilliance and originality of the Tara, surely the work of a great and inspired artist.

... Although both the Nepalese and Indian tradition exerted tremendous influence on Tibetan painting at this formative period, the styles were rarely intermingled;





FIG. 6.10 (detail of Fig. 5.13)  
Green Tārā

paintings were executed in one or the other idiom. Here they are not only combined but also melded into a seamless synthesis. The squat multitier Bengali temple shrine with its multicourse base is elaborated in its form and decoration far beyond anything found in either Tibetan or Indian paintings. The Nepalese genius for miniaturization is seen in the embellishment of each surface with a profusion of decorative motifs and in the representations of bas-relief sculptures that are technical tours de force, far beyond anything seen in earlier paintings. The space in the painting has a clarity and depth rarely encountered. The tones that have been chosen project the goddess and her throne forward (theoretically) from the interior of the somber shrine, which itself is set off from the background by a thicket of trees. Although the trees and architecture exist in relatively shallow space, the goddess is unusually three-dimensional.

Without further evidence, Kossak (p. 146) at first hesitated to attribute the painting to the great Newar master Anige. But after considering its similarities with the Shalu mural (dated 1306) published in his introductory chapter as his figure 2, he considered an attribution to Anige to be more probable.<sup>145</sup>

### *Shalu Murals*

Shalu Monastery stands in a small side valley of the northwestern Nyang Valley, about twelve miles (twenty kilometers) from Shigatse. The main building (Fig. 6.11) is remarkable for its Chinese tiled roof and architectural details; it was built with Yuan imperial support and some imported artisans. Most of its murals and numerous sculptures from this period survive (for an example of a sculpture, see Figure 6.12). It was the seat of a myriarch (*khri skor*) governorship during period of Mongol occupation and Sakya administration. Its local lords, the Shalu Kushang (Zhwa lu sKu zhang) of the Je (lCe) clan, served as governors and rose higher and higher in status through marrying several of their ladies to prominent members of the Sakya Khön family.

The original foundation at Shalu dated to 1027, and its founder was Jetsün Sherab Jungnay (lCe btsun Shes rab 'byung gnas), a master from the same Je (lCe) clan whose portrait graces a Yuan-period mural (Fig. 6.13). The original structure was much smaller than after its Yuan-period expansion, and a few remainders of early wall paintings survive.<sup>146</sup> The most significant expansions and chapels with murals occurred about two and a half or three centuries later, from the time of three Shalu Kushang lords of the Yuan period:

1. Gönpö Pel (ruled circa 1290–1303)
2. Drakpa Gyaltsen (ruled 1306–1333)
3. Kunga Döndrub (ruled circa 1333–1355)<sup>147</sup>



FIG. 6.11  
View of the Serkhang (gSer khang) of Shalu Monastery  
Photograph by Ulrich von Schroeder, 1992  
Literature: U. von Schroeder 2001, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, vol. 2, *Tibet and China*, Fig. XV-8, p. 925.



FIG. 6.12  
Six-syllable Avalokiteśvara  
Newar style statue at Shalu  
Literature: U. von Schroeder 2001, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, vol. 2, *Tibet and China*, no. 230A, p. 960.

Shalu Monastery provides important points of comparison, for art history in general and for a history of the Beri style, in particular. As H. Kreijger wrote in his article on mural styles there:<sup>148</sup>

The murals, sculpture and architecture of this site are magnificent re-





FIG. 6.13  
Jetsün Sherab Jungnay  
1290–1303  
North Wing Chapel, Shalu  
Photograph by Brynn Bruijn, 1987  
Literature: H. Kreijger 1997, fig. 196; F. Ricca and L. Fournier 2001, fig. 1; R. Munneke and R. Poelmeijer eds. 1992, third color plate after p. 24.

minders of the elegant, cosmopolitan artistic culture which flourished in central Tibet before the fourteenth century. The diversity of styles in its murals, together with the chronological information in accompanying inscriptions and in related historical treatises, provide clues to the development of style in central Tibetan painting between the early eleventh and mid-fourteenth century.

Note in the portrayal of Jotsün (Fig. 6.13) the presence of relatively simple (one-segment) pillars of lotus stalks that sprout from a vase and uphold the upper elements of the backrest arch. *Makaras* with voluted tails rest upon them.

Figure 6.14 depicts the Tathāgata Ratnasambhava from a mural in the North Wing Chapel, Shalu. Painted in



FIG. 6.14  
Ratnasambhava  
1290–1303  
North Wing Chapel, Shalu  
Photograph by Brynn Bruijn, 1987  
Literature: H. Kreijger 1997, fig. 195; F. Ricca and L. Fournier 2001, fig. 19.

about 1290 to 1303, this painting, like the portrait of the founder illustrated in Figure 6.13, is preserved in one of the chapels built during the earliest phase of Yuan-period expansion of the structure led by the Shalu lord Gönpö Pal. These murals thus date to about the 1290s, roughly the same period as the wall paintings at Luri in Lo Mustang.

Figure 6.15 depicts Buddha Śākyamuni in a slightly later mural in the Kanjur (bSe sgo ma) Chapel of Shalu. That chapel was built in about 1306 to 1333, the major stage of Yuan-sponsored expansion of the temple. This was the period of the illustrious Shalu lord Drakpa Gyaltsen, who distinguished himself by inviting the learned master Butön Rinchen Drup (Bu ston Rin chen grub, 1290–1364) to serve as abbot of Shalu.

The present mural is remarkable stylistically for the presence of the minor celestial deities who worship the main deities from their perches high in the sky on stylized clouds with a distinctive trilobate shape.<sup>149</sup> Note also the stylized clouds in the sky at the top, presumably



FIG. 6.15  
Buddha Śākyamuni  
1306–1333  
Kanjur Lhakhang or Library Chapel, Shalu Monastery  
Photograph by Brynn Bruijn, 1987  
Literature: H. Neumann 1997, fig. 213; central buddha, F. Ricca and L. Fournier 2001, fig. 31.

embodying Chinese elements in a Newar-influenced Yuan-court style.

The animal-supported throne back has the full set of animals, with four beneath the plinth (elephant, lion, *shangs shangs*, and leogryph), and three above it (*makara*, *naga*, and *garuda*). Below, a rampant lion supports the throne pedestal. Each animal, along with its human rider, is carefully executed.

Figure 6.16 depicts Amoghasiddhi, Vairocana, and Amitābha as three of the five Tathāgatas of Yogatantra mandalas. This wall painting, too, survived in the same Kanjur Chapel, or Library Chapel. H. Kreijger described it as one of three immense murals covering the walls of this chapel. Executed in what he called a “Newar-Yuan style,” these murals, compared with the earlier north-wing chapel, possess a more subdued color scheme. In addition to the softer and more subtle





FIG. 6.16

Three Tathāgatas

1306–1333

Kanjur Lhakhang or Library Chapel, Shalu  
Photograph by Brynn Bruijn, 1987

Literature: H. Kreijger 1997, fig. 199; F. Ricca and L. Fournier 2001, fig. 10; and R. Vitali 1990, pl. 72, for the central Vairocana.

palette, the faces of the buddhas in this chapel seem more heart-shaped and their shoulders broader.<sup>150</sup> When carefully compared with the slightly earlier North Wing Chapel, this chapel's paintings "reveal a refined painting technique and a great attention to detail, particularly in the decorative strips of the bottom frame. Typically Nepalese motifs and figures are treated here with exceptional care and precision, and with a wealth of colours and shadings that suscite pleasure and wonder in the observer: one is literally seduced by the lavishness and perfection of the details, by the affectation of plant and floral motifs, by the elegance and grace with which the goddesses of the ritual offerings are portrayed."<sup>151</sup>

Figure 6.17 depicts a bodhisattva flanking the Tathāgata Vairocana, but

from a mural in the circumambulation path (*skor lam*) encircling the Yum Chenmo Chapel. Also dating to the period 1306 to 1333 and employing a palette of richer and more saturated colors, this is another example of the masterful style of the Kanjur or Library Chapel. It is remarkable not only for its magnificent artistry but also for an inscription identifying the Tibetan painter Chimpa Sönam Bum (mChims pa bSod nams 'bum) as the artist who painted it.

R. Vitali in the first Western detailed account of the Shalu murals attributed the whole internal wall of the circumambulation path to this artist. The fact that his clan name clearly identifies him as a Tibetan and that Tibetan written sources stress that artists were summoned to Shalu from Yuan China led Vitali to conclude that Chimpa must have been a Tibetan trained in the Anige's court workshop at the Yuan court and that these paintings were therefore "a unique example of art in the Aniko style."<sup>152</sup>

But the Tibetan sources never say or imply that all artists who worked at Shalu came from Yuan China. That



FIG. 6.17

Flanking Bodhisattva

1306–1333

Circumambulation Path (sKor lam) encircling the Yum Chenmo chapel, Shalu  
Photograph by R. Vitali

Literature: R. Vitali 1990, pl. 66.

would have been an impossibility for a project of this size, complexity, and duration.<sup>153</sup> It seems equally possible that the skills of Chimpa might have been requisitioned from somewhere in Tsang or Tibet, as one of the best available professional painters.

Figure 6.18 depicts Six-syllable (Ṣaḍakṣara) Avalokiteśvara as the main figure on the east wall of a small temple dedicated to that bodhisattva. The chapel housing this outstanding mural on the corner of the north wing in Shalu was relatively ignored until H. Neumann documented it in detail in 2001. A significant feature of this temple is that it contains the sole surviving series of inscribed guru portraits at Shalu. The names of the lineage masters have been extracted from the mural and published:<sup>154</sup>





FIG. 6.18  
Six-syllable Avalokiteśvara  
Early 14th century  
East wall, Shadakshara Avalokiteshvara  
Chapel, Shalu Monastery  
Photograph by Brynn Bruijn, 1987  
Literature: H. Neumann 2001, fig. 3.

1. Avalokiteśvara (Thugs rje chen po)
2. Great Adept (Grub chen) Rāhula
3. Lotawa Rinchen Zangpo (Lo tsha ba Rin chen bzang po)
4. Nagtsho Lotsawa (Nag tsho Lo tsha ba)
5. Jayulwa Sherab Gyaltsen (Bha yul ba Shes rab rgyal mtshan)
6. Tshultrim Gyaltsen (Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan)
7. Rongpa Chaksorwa (Rong pa Phyag sor ba)
8. Phakpa Jegom ('Phags pa lCe sgom)
9. Drubthob Kyergangpa (Grub thob sKyer sgang pa)
10. Sanggye Nyenpa (Sangs rgyas gNyan pa)
11. Sanggye Tönpa (Sangs rgyas sTon pa)

## 12. Chökyi Je Shönnu Gruppa (Chos kyi rje gZhon nu grub pa, d. 1319)<sup>155</sup>

The spiritual lineage pictured in this chapel seemed to the first researchers not to represent a historical sequence. But if we investigate it further, these lamas turn out to be a series of historical teachers, all of whom can be located in lineage records or histories. The lineage depicted in the Śaḍakṣara Chapel turns out to be that for Śaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara in the tradition of the Shangpa Kagyü lama Kyergangpa (Tib. *Thugs rje chen po sKyer sgang pa'i lugs*). This tradition was brought to Tibet by Atiśa and transmitted further by his disciple and translator Nagtsho Lotsawa. The last lineage lama depicted in the Shalu murals proves to be a prominent Shangpa Kagyü lama named Shönnu Druppa (gZhon nu grub pa), who was devoutly supported by the Shalu Kushang lord.<sup>156</sup> I would assume that this master visited Shalu before his death in 1319.

Though this tradition of Kyegangpa is not treated as a special subject in the Avalokiteśvara cycle section of the *Blue Annals*, it is recorded in some lineage records. The Fifth Dalai Lama, for instance, recorded in great detail the lineage and its later transmitters in his own record of teachings.<sup>157</sup> The first twelve gurus that he lists are mostly the same, except for variations in their names:

1. 'Phags pa sPyan ras gzigs (Avalokiteśvara)
2. Grub chen Rā hu la gupta badzra
3. Jo bo chen po Dī paṃ kā ra shrī dznyā na (Atiśa)
4. Nag tsho Lo tsā ba Tshul khriims rgyal ba
5. Rong pa Phyag sor ba Shes rab 'bar
6. Wa yu ba Shes rab tshul khriims
7. lCe sgom Shes rab rdo rje
8. dBon ston sKyer sgang pa Chos kyi seng ge
9. gNyan ston Chos kyi shes rab
10. Chos rje sTon pa bTson 'grus seng ge
11. 'Gro mgon Shangs ston Tshul khriims 'bum
12. gNyan ston rGyal mtshan dpal bzang

He goes on to record fifteen more lamas in this main lineage, and then eight branches in the transmission, including those transmitted by the later lamas of Ngor.<sup>158</sup>

Ngorchen's record of teachings notes that he received this initiation from the master Sazang Phakpa, who had received them from Ngülchu Gyalsay Thokme Zangpo (dNgul chu rGyal sras Thogs med bzang po). Both the Fifth Dalai Lama's and Ngorchen's versions, however, omit the translator Rinchen Zangpo (who is portrayed at Shalu), while Ngorchen traces three more Indian spiritual progenitors.<sup>159</sup> The same source records that several of the key lamas of this Shangpa Avalokiteśvara lineage in the twelfth or thirteenth century also transmitted the



core Shangpa (Shangs pa) Kagyü teachings of Niguma, and among them we find the lama Shönnu Drup (gZhon nu grub) of the Shalu murals.<sup>160</sup>

### *Thangkas with Lineages*

Figure 6.19 portrays the embodiment of great compassion, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, with two companions. The bodhisattva here has been depicted again in the same four-armed form known as Ṣaḍakṣara (He of the Six-syllable [Mantra]). Avalokiteśvara was a widely worshiped deity in both India and Tibet, and his mantra was recited in Tibet nearly everywhere.<sup>161</sup>

In this elegant, carefully rendered thangka, Avalokiteśvara clasps two of his four hands together before him, and with his second right hand he holds up a rosary of white pearls. With his second left hand, he grasps the stem of a white lotus. He is richly ornamented, wearing on his head a golden tiara with five teardrop-shaped jewel settings, among which the central three jewels are much more prominent. Most of his black hair has been tied behind the central jewel of the tiara in a single topknot, which is crowned by its own golden crest ornament. Something resembling the legs of an antelope skin hangs over his shoulders.

The small divine entourage accompanying Avalokiteśvara includes, to his left, the bodhisattva Mañidhara (Tib. Nor bu 'dzin pa, Jewel Holder), who has four arms and is yellow in color. He holds his hands in the same position as Avalokiteśvara but grasps a hidden jewel between his first pair of hands, which are folded together. He sits partially turned to look toward Avalokiteśvara. To Avalokiteśvara's right sits the goddess four-armed Ṣaḍakṣarī (Tib. Yi ge drug ma, She of the Six Syllables), who is partially turned, lifting one knee, and she gazes intently at Avalokiteśvara. She is, it appears, the same as the main deity,

except that she is female. Both she and Mañidhara sit on their own much smaller lotus seats. (One of those seats, the one beneath the goddess, was recently restored; the painting had lost a strip along the bottom two-thirds of its right edge, including that seat and most of the goddess's face and torso. See Fig. 6.19a.)

The divine trio sits within a five-lobed arch, which is meant to show the opening of a grotto within a mountain, with pillars of different-colored stone to the right and left, including even a lower strip of stone slabs forming the bottom of a frame, below. The edges of the stonework pillars, etc., are lined with strips of gold, which are inlaid with jewels of alternating colors. The bottom strip of stonework does not consist of little peaked elements but portrays its stylized stone slabs differently. The lotus seat of Avalokiteśvara seems to rest on that strip of jewel-inlaid stone, and no ordinary throne pedestal has been depicted. The trio sits not in an ordinary cave but in a beautifully decorated cave-temple, as shown by the fringe of decorations (painted red) that hang all along the bottom edge of the main arch of the cave opening on holy Mount Potalaka.

The mountain above them is represented by two series of stylized multi-color crags, surrounded by a crest of flowering trees. That fringe of stony crags is densely inhabited by four meditating Indian hermit-seers (Rishi, Tib. *drang srong*) and the five chief buddhas of the five buddha families. Directly above Avalokiteśvara is his guru and the chief of the lotus family: Buddha Amitābha. On the individual white, yellow, green, red, or pink peaks of the stylized mountain crags, mountain goats, lions, apes, or other animals or birds climb, perch, or cavort, many too small to be seen at first glance.

Beneath the five-lobed arch, Avalokiteśvara sits within his own temple niche, which has a dark blue back-

ground and an ornate backrest arch above. That arch includes such classic elements as elaborately voluted golden sea monster (*makara*) tails on either side—the bumps of which decorate the outer edge of Avalokiteśvara's head nimbus—and a winged, red-faced beakless *garuda* at the top (as in Figure 6.4). The deep red backrest cushion behind his body has been beautified with ornate filigree-like volutes painted with lac dye a subtle deep red.

The painting's patrons, members of a well-to-do family, are pictured below, worshiping the great bodhisattva. The artist depicted them carefully in their own box, below to the right, painting each with individual characteristics. All kneel on one or both knees, with palms clasped reverently before them, each holding a flower. Before them are arranged a row of offerings set on stands with legs. Leading the group spiritually and shown as their senior, nearest the deity, is a monk whose dress is very simple. Behind him sit two laymen, seemingly middle-aged, perhaps two brothers of the monk. Both wear purple hats and either a white outer robe or white inner *chuba* (Tibetan robe). Their long hair hangs down behind, and it is painted with a white edge of unknown significance. The next two figures are ladies, whose ornamented black hair hangs down their backs. The senior lady, perhaps the wife of the laymen, wears a white outer shawl and a prominent hair ornament. The final two patrons, a younger woman and man, were added by the restorer.

The same principal deities have been documented in a chapel at Shalu, though there the two attendant deities are pictured on the adjoining walls. (See Fig. 6.18 and H. Neumann 2001.) There Buddha Amitābha appears at the top of Avalokiteśvara's topknot of hair, and an animal skin hangs over one shoulder. In the Shalu mural the principal deity sits alone under a six-lobed arch, surrounded





FIG. 6.19  
 Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara of the Six  
 Syllables, with Two Companions  
 Ca. 1300–1320  
 15 ¼ x 13 ¼ in. (38.8 x 33.7 cm)  
 The Kronos Collections



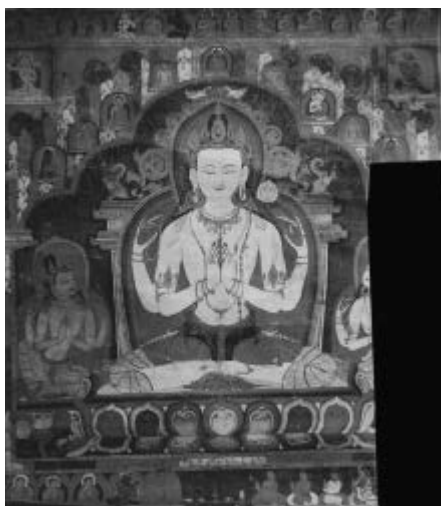


FIG. 6.19A  
Figure 6.19 before restoration. The newly added section is shown in black.

by a fringe of stylized multicolor crags (of a different shape), though with a similar rock motif along the bottom edge. In Shalu the fringe of mountains is not as densely populated with deities or animals, and just two bearded anchorites sit meditating in circular caves.

The survival of this divine trio as an established iconographic group in Tibetan Buddhism is confirmed by its presence in the Manchu-sponsored block-printed pantheon of 1810 and in its published painted copy.<sup>162</sup> That pantheon specifies that it portrays Avalokiteśvara of the six-syllables in the “tradition of Atiśa” (Tib. Jo bo lugs). The Indian master Atiśa was personally involved in the introduction into Tibet of two *sādhana* (meditation liturgy) texts for this form of that bodhisattva. He wrote one of the *sādhana*s for Ṣaḍakṣara that is preserved in the Tanjur.<sup>163</sup> He also helped the translator Shākya Lotrö (Shākya blo gros) translate another such *sādhana* into Tibetan, the one written by Pūjavajra.

Several Indian traditions for worshipping Avalokiteśvara were transmitted through large collections of *sādhana*s in the Tanjur, such as the “Ocean of Sādhana” (*sGrub thabs rgya mtsho*, also called the *sGrub thabs kun btus*),

which was translated in the late thirteenth century by Yarlung Drakpa Gyaltsen (Yar lung Lo tsā ba Grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1242–1346) at the order of Chögyal Phakpa.<sup>164</sup> The record of teachings received of the Fifth Dalai Lama records that he received initiations for two *sādhana*s for this form of Avalokiteśvara as part of that collection.<sup>165</sup>

The depiction of Six-syllable Avalokiteśvara and his companions in the early-nineteenth-century published pantheon is almost the same as in this thangka.<sup>166</sup> The only difference that I noted is that the painted version depicts a red head of Buddha Amitābha at the top of Avalokiteśvara’s black topknot. But this was added by the painter of the pantheon book; the original block-printed version of the pantheon does not show it. The thangka, for its part, depicts a normal jewel ornament atop Avalokiteśvara’s head, and though Amitābha has been pictured, he appears as an independent buddha who sits directly above Avalokiteśvara.

The lineage structure of the upper and lower horizontal rows of Figure 6.19 is shown in diagram [A].

The main attested later transmission of this divine trio is through the Atiśa tradition (*jo bo lugs*), one example of which was the tradition of the Shangpa lama Kyergangpa seen in Shalu. We may thus provisionally assume that the lineal gurus in the thangka also embodied a variation of an Atiśa lineage. In fact, guru number 9 turns out to be an Indian pundit with a yellow hat, which matches Atiśa’s normal iconography (but also that of numerous Indian pundits). Yet that pundit is followed by guru 10, a lay disciple, whom we can here presume to be not

Dromtön but another important disciple, Nagtsho Lotsawa. After him follows an almost uniform sequence of ordained Tibetan masters, as one would expect of masters from the Kadampa tradition.

Another lineage for Atiśa’s transmission of Avalokiteśvara of Six Syllables can be found in the final appendix that records the lineages for the various traditions transmitted in the compendium of *sādhana*s entitled “Sādhana of the Ocean of Tutelaries, a Source of Jewels” by Jonang Jetsün Tāranātha (Jo nang rJe btsun Tāranātha, 1575–1634).<sup>167</sup> That work, which Tāranātha completed in 1608, contains both a detailed *sādhana* and lineage record at the end, in chapter 25.<sup>168</sup> It contains a lineage for these three deities in Atiśa’s tradition.<sup>169</sup> Assuming that a similar lineage is shown, the final guru depicted in the thangka would have flourished in about the mid-fourteenth century, the period of Nyamme Sanggye Palzang (mNyam med Sangs rgyas dpal bzang), guru number 11 in the lineage.

Figure 6.20 depicts the same main and minor figures as Figure 6.19. Painted in a Beri style of about the same period, it confirms the existence of this Indian lineage as painted in Figure 6.19. It begins with exactly the same first eight divine figures, after which the lineage switches to a series of nine identically dressed Tibetan ordained lamas. But between those two groups of lineal gurus, two important figures are missing: the final Indian pundit (presumed in Fig. 6.19 to be Atiśa) and the first lay Tibetan teacher (presumed to be Nagtsho Lotsawa).

Behind the main figure is a three-lobed arch, which is more reminiscent of

[A]															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	d1	d2						p1	p2	p3	p4	*p5	*p6





FIG. 6.20  
Avalokiteśvara Śaḍakṣara  
Ca. mid-14th century  
15 ½ x 18 in (39.4 x 45.7 cm)  
Collection of Moke Mokotoff

[B]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12							13	14
	15	16	17							P

a rainbow or nimbus edge than a border of a cave opening as in Figure 6.19. The trio of main figures is complemented by two small bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi, one above each companion bodhisattva. In the painting’s landscape we find a simpler version of craggy mountains, and though the Five Tathāgatas are present in the same order, only two seers have been depicted. The trees are simpler and fewer, one pair prominently filling the background corners behind each Tathāgata. The foreground strip at the bottom is decorated with vine-roundels of aquatic origin. Its four central roundels are filled with flowers, and the first three roundels to the left contain gurus 15, 16, and 17. The lineage can be charted as shown in diagram [B].

To confirm where a lineage of nine ordained Tibetan masters leads us chronologically in Figures 6.19 and 6.20, assuming that this is a Kadampa lineage, let us check a lineage for four-armed Avalokiteśvara that was taught by Atiśa and later transmitted by the abbots of Narthang. Such a lineage is found in a collection of thirty-three Atiśa-transmitted tantric lineages compiled by Chim Namkha Trak (mChims Nam kha’ grags) that was commonly known as the “Hundred Sādhana of Narthang” (*sNar thang brgya rtsa*), and that deity is also referred to in a published later pantheon.<sup>170</sup> The Fifth Dalai Lama lists as his main lineage for this collection one that passes for five generations through the early masters of Sangphu Neuthok before it was transmitted to Narthang. But for this Six-syllable form of Avalokiteśvara, in particular, he gives another lineage.<sup>171</sup> Up to guru number 4, it was the same as a side lineage for both Akṣobhya (Mi ‘khrugs pa) and Śaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara. The next four gurus are a special lineage just for Śaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara. With guru number 9 (who was number 12 in the main lineage, on. p. 36b) the lineage



continues with the main lineage. Guru number 10 (who was number 13 in the main lineage) was here Drotön Kunga Gyaltsen (Gro ston Kun dga' rgyal mtshan), who flourished in roughly the early to mid-fourteenth century. According to this lineage, then, generation 11 of the thangka, the last lineal lama depicted, may have flourished in roughly the mid- or late thirteenth century.

To confirm again those estimates, let us compare another of Atiśa's lineages that was transmitted by masters of Narthang. Loter Wangpo in his record of teachings received for his other non-canonical collection, the Compendium of Tantras, gives a lineage of the Yogācāra tradition of the bodhisattva's vow. It passes through some Kadampa masters, including a few thirteenth-century abbots of Narthang.<sup>172</sup> This third lineage includes one more guru between numbers 4 and 8 than the previous Kadampa lineage. Its eleventh master was Sönam Drakpa, who flourished in about the early or mid-fourteenth century, and who would thus indicate a dating about a generation earlier than the eleventh generation of the previous Kadampa lineage.

Thus, all three lineages lead us to estimate that the eleventh master in the lineage of Figures 6.19 and 6.20 flourished in roughly the early or mid-fourteenth century, assuming of course that the yellow-hatted pundit was Atiśa. That would agree with the style, which could be roughly dated to within a generation of the later Yuan-period murals of Shalu (1320s–1330s).

An excellent painting to compare is Figure 6.21, an earlier painting that depicts again Śaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara leading that same pair of bodhisattvas. Once again he is shown in a cave and with similar stylized mountain surroundings, but here the painting has clearly been rendered in a Pāla style that would date it several generations earlier than Figures 6.19 and 6.20. This thangka

gives an idea of what a Pāla prototype for the previous painting may have looked like. Note the pointed ornaments and head nimbus of the main figure and the simple rainbowlike body nimbuses of his two attendants.

One of the charms of the painting is the sea of lotus leaves that cover the surface of the rectangular pond beneath the principal deity, from whose bottom the lotuses of the main deities' seats sprout. Four humans wade waist deep in the water, and the darker skinned one to the far right, nearest the pair of yoked oxen, may be the herdsman of the oxen. The pair of humans to the left bathe themselves, oblivious of the presence of the divine central figures. Here in the water we also find many animals depicted, some of them strikingly similar to those below Green Tara in Pal's catalog of the private Ford Collection.<sup>173</sup> They include waterfowl, elephants, rabbits, and a boldly striped tiger.

In the mountain crags above the main figures, below the five Tathāgatas of the mandala several adepts live in caves, the two outer ones (numbers 11 and 14 of the following chart) as solitary anchorites and the two inner ones (numbers 12 and 13) with companions. Many birds and animals perch on the crags or lurk around them, some painted small and others disproportionately large.

The painting lacks the usual Pāla border of gold and alternating jewels around its outer edges. The only similar strips of inlaid jewels are on the two plinths in the throne back behind the main figure. Instead, the artist employed strips of stylized rocks of alternating colors along the two sides and the bottom. The cushion behind the deity is black and not the intense blue of the cave background. The main figures wear short red dhotis, which cover the tops of their thighs.

Though the painting lacks easily datable features, it can be dated on the basis of style to about the late twelfth or

thirteenth century. P. Pal dated it to the early twelfth century, noting similarities with the preceding painting of Tara in his catalog (no. 131). But a closer examination shows some noteworthy divergences. The crowns and armlets are not as sharp and triangular as in the other image. The overall construction has loosened up, with a less crowded arrangement of figures in the center, which was made possible by a squarer painting surface. The patron is no longer shown with the archaic three-lobed backrest. The arrangement of offerings has changed, as has the treatment of the gold and multicolor bumps outside the head nimbus, which no longer ring the entire nimbus. The depiction of the figure identified by Pal as Atiśa looks radically different.

The structure of the painting is shown as diagram [C]. All the figures are deities and not humans, except possibly the four figures seated in the four corners: numbers 4, 10, 20, and P, the patron. Number 4 may depict the Indian adept Rāhula who was important for transmitting this teaching to Atiśa. Number 10 has been taken to be Atiśa, and he does wear a yellow pundit's hat. But he is otherwise dressed more like a Tibetan lama, wearing orange brocade outer robes and a yellow-fringed lama vest but not the pure red monk's robes of an Indian monk (which was Atiśa's garb in the green Tara in Pal 2001, no. 131, p. 221, though there he wore a red pundit's hat). On the other hand, figure number 20 of our chart is indeed dressed like an Indian monk, but without a hat. Finally, the patron (P) sits in a corner, with several offerings arrayed before him. He wears a monk's brocade or silk robes but not a lama's vest. Before him, above the offerings in his little cubicle, are three tiny deities on a shelf or altar.

Jane Casey Singer published another painting of this form of Avalokiteśvara, though with standing attendant bodhisattvas.<sup>174</sup> Though later,





FIG. 6.21  
 Śaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara with Attendants  
 Ca. late 12th or 13th century  
 34 x 29 in. (86.4 x 74.6 cm)  
 The John and Berthe Ford Collection,  
 promised gift to the Walters Art Museum  
 Literature: P. Pal 2001, no. 132.

[C]	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12				13	14
			2	1	3		
	P	15	16	17	18	19	20





FIG. 6.22  
 Śaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara  
 Ca. mid-13th century  
 11  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 13  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (30 x 34 cm)  
 Private Collection  
 Literature: J.C. Singer 2003, fig. 21.

it still falls within the bounds of the Pāla style (see Fig. 6.22). Its painter encourages an illusion of depth by overlapping the main three-lobed arch behind the central triad of deities with several elements of the head nimbuses. No trace of stylized background mountains is seen.

The very small gurus to the left and right of the main figure are distinctive: one seems to be the dark-skinned (Tibetan) yogi Ling Repa in a white cotton robe, but the second figure is a Tibetan cotton-wearing yogi (*ras pa*). (Compare the similarly dressed dark-skinned master in the left columns of Figures 5.1 and 5.2.) Two more typically dressed ordained lamas sit directly below the two small gurus. For them to sit on the bottom row, beneath a row of buddhas, breaks normal structural con-

vention. If the two bottom lamas depict subsequent lineal masters, as I believe likely, the second lama would have flourished in about the mid-thirteenth century, and the patron would have commissioned the painting in about 1250 to 1280. The thangka presumably belonged to the corpus of paintings that Sanggye Ōnpo took from Taklung Monastery to Riwoche; Casey Singer in her caption reports that it was “consecrated by Onpo Lama Rimpoche.”<sup>175</sup> Its style is not typical of the Taklung/ Riwoche corpus.<sup>176</sup>

Another excellent treatment of the same trio of bodhisattvas is Figure 6.23. But unlike the previous examples, both Beri and Pāla, this one was not produced in Tibet. Painted in Nepal about the same time as Figure 6.19, it reveals a few iconographic departures from the Tibetan renderings. The attendant deity Mañidhara is not yellow but white. The two attendant deities do not turn toward the central deity, and they are honored by parasols above their heads. Buddha Amitābha does not sit directly above the principal deity but to his right. Besides the Five Tathāgatas, no hermits are



FIG. 6.23  
 Śaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara with Attendants  
 Nepal; early or mid-14th century  
 21  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 17  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (54 x 45 cm)  
 Private Collection  
 Literature: A. Heller 1999, plate 74.

shown in the mountain fringe, just crags, trees, and animals. (Circles representing the sun and moon are seen in the dark blue sky of the upper background.)

Here, too, the background of the cave is not dark blue, but red, decorated with scrollwork. The edge of that opening is a fringe of gold set with jewels of alternating red and blue. No large pool of lotuses lies in the foreground, and an entire strip at the bottom of the painting portrays the family of patrons who commissioned the painting, a crowned Newar ritual master (Vajracarya) with a monk attendant to the left and four others, presumably his female relatives, in a separate box to the right. An impressive array of five offerings has been placed in the center, directly below the main deity.





FIG. 6.24  
Blue-green Vajraśattva  
Early or mid-14th century  
22 ½ x 17 ½ in. (57.2 x 44.5 cm)  
Private Collection  
Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1996,  
*Weisheit und Liebe*, no.132; M. Rhie and R.  
Thurman 1991, no. 132; and G. Tucci 1949,  
p. 584.

[D]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	b1					b2	10
	11							12
	13							14
	15							16

Figure 6.24 is a noteworthy thangka probably dating to about the same period as some of the later Yuan-period murals at Shalu. It depicts as its main figure the deity Blue-green Vajraśattva (*rDo rje rnam par 'joms pa ljang sngon*) and possesses the lineage shown in diagram [D], without Vajradhara as number 1. The first bodhisattva on the second horizontal row (b1) is Mañjuśrī, while the second bodhisattva on the same row (b2) is Vajrapāṇi.

Published pantheons confirm the identity of the main figure as Blue-green Vajraśattva, though the corresponding deity in the *Three Hundred Deities* pantheon, number 173, holds a crossed vajra.<sup>177</sup> Called by Tucci a “wrathful Vajrasattva,” the main deity may be Vajraśattva in the tradition of Bari the Translator (*Ba ri Lo tsā ba*), who was one of Sachen’s gurus in his youth. The lineage as found in Ngorchen’s *Record of Teachings Received* was transmitted through Lowo Lotsawa (*Glo bo Lo tsā ba*) to Chögyal Phakpa, which seems to be possible here.<sup>178</sup> The lineage in the record of teachings received of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) comes down through Sachen, who is not, however, portrayed in this thangka.<sup>179</sup> In either case, a disciple of guru 16 would have flourished in about 1300 to 1330.

Thus, if this is Vajraśattva of Bari Lotsawa’s tradition (*rDo rje rnam 'joms ba ri lugs*), it would date to much earlier than Rhie’s estimate of 1425 to 1450, which she reached though stylistic comparisons.<sup>180</sup> An earlier dating also seems supported by the striped *dhoti* worn by the main deity and the archaic cloth-covered throne back behind him. (See Fig. 6.23; cf. Fig. 6.11.)

Figure 6.25 portrays Buddha Śākyamuni surrounded by more than a hundred episodes from stories of his previous births. Though it lacks a lineage, it depicts as a minor figure below the Buddha a black-hatted Karmapa, who I



believe to be the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (Rang byung rdo rje, 1284–1339). That Karmapa was the one who first compiled and taught a much longer set of sacred Jātaka tales, presumably the very stories pictured here.

All six supporting animals seem to be present in the throne back, standing one atop the other to support the lowest plinth. The *makara* tail above does not develop into the usual voluted circles but changes here instead into, after its first bump, the golden spiraling bezels for a series of progressively smaller pointed, tear-drop-shaped jewels. An unusual series of creatures supports the throne below. In the inner frames of the pedestal, ordinary lions occur, but from the next frames, athletes emerge and lift the throne base above them. Meanwhile from both sides still bigger minor divinities with radiating starlike mops of flaming hair grasp the pedestal and energetically lift it. Between those six, three more special figures make cameo appearances within a little pentagon and atop three lotus petals: the standing Buddha Śākyamuni in the middle, and below him an Indian master to our left, and a black-hatted Karmapa on the right. (Through these three the painting pays homage to the Buddha, whose previous lives were depicted, to the main Indian author of the narrative, and to its recent Tibetan compiler.)

The decorative details in the dark blue back cushion of the main figure are just barely visible in some places. But the ones in the red head nimbus and dark blue background are better preserved. In the head nimbus, the roundels of whorls have lotuses at their centers, perhaps executed with black ink, highlighted here and there with touches of yellow. The scrollwork on the background also has yellow highlights and is best preserved on the right side. This thangka seems to exemplify a Beri style of the mid-fourteenth century. It illustrates yet again that the Beri style was by no means lim-



ited to patrons of the Sakya School in this period.

Figure 6.26 depicts a mandala of Hevajra as transmitted by lamas of the Sakya School, but not the usual one used for the Path with the Fruit instructions. It may portray the same Hevajra tradition as mandala number 105 of the *Compendium of Tantras* (*rGyud sde kun btus*) that has been published in the book *The Ngor Mandalas of Tibet*, namely, the nine-deity mandala of Hevajra in the tradition of the adept Dombhi Heruka (*Dom bhi lugs kyi kye rdor lha dgu'i dkyil khor*).<sup>181</sup> The position of the main figure's feet in Figure 6.26 marks him as different from the Hevajra appearing in

FIG. 6.25  
Buddha Śākyamuni and Jātaka Stories  
Mid- or late 14th century  
58 x 45 in. (147.32 x 114.30 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2003.50.4 (HAR 230)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 1.





FIG. 6.26  
Mandala of Hevajra in a Sakya Lineage, but  
not for the Path with the Fruit  
Ca. 1320 to 1350  
21 ¼ x 15 ½ in. (54 x 39.4 cm)  
Zimmerman Family Collection  
Literature: P. Pal 1991, p. 149, no. 83.

[E]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	d1	d2	d3	14b?	15b?	16b?	17b?



the nine-deity mandala of the “Instruction tradition” (*Man ngag lugs*), mandala number 99 of the same set.<sup>182</sup> Dombhi Heruka’s tradition was one of four main Hevajra traditions that Sachen received (*kye rdor bka’ babs bzhi*), and it was prized because Dombhi Heruka had received the teachings from his guru the great yogic adept Virupa and in a vision, directly from a *ḍākiṇī*.

This is only the second time that this mandala has been published, and some details of its center remain to be confirmed from the liturgical texts. In the center of the mandala the eight goddesses dance within a second clearly defined ring. Outside their ring, pairs of vases stand in each corner, eight in all.<sup>183</sup> Beyond them dance sixteen tiny goddesses. Beyond the four magnificent gates, lie the eight charnel grounds, here rendered with great skill, with the great adept, stupa, and other requisite features in each.

One noteworthy stylistic feature of the painting is its bright and distinctive cometlike flower motif eight times in the dark blue background outside the vajra ring and flames encircling the eight cremation grounds, near the eight auspicious emblems. On the surface of the same dark blue background, many lotuses seem to float. Four more Hevajras accompanied by two goddesses stand within lotus-vine roundels in the same dark corners. In the bottom row of the painting stand ten wrathful deities (Tib. *khro bo bcu*) and two other protectors, including Mahākāla Pañjaraṇātha (Gurkyi mgon po) at the far right.

I remarked above upon the unusual lineal structure of this thangka (in connection with Figure 2.10). The complicated, painstakingly executed iconography of this mandala leads me to believe that the commissioners would have devoted similar care to depicting their gurus. They probably meant to portray the specific masters who linked them most closely with this deity and its

practice. When we investigate the lineage, we notice that it apparently does not portray a single, uninterrupted sequence. The lineage, shown in diagram [E], seems to continue as far as guru number 15 and then breaks off, interrupted by three tutelary deities (d1, d2 and d3, two male tutelary deities, and a yogiṇī), inserted here in a very prominent position. Guru number 15 could be the eminent ruler-monk Chögyal Phakpa, and the red-hatted lama before him, number 14, probably Sakya Pandita, his uncle. When we pick up the lineage again on the other side of the three deities, we find again a lama wearing that highly distinctive red hat, whom I thus assume to be Sakya Pandita appearing a second time. I have numbered him, accordingly, 14b. The lineage then continues another three gurus (numbers 15b through 17b).

The best explanation I can offer for this iconography of early gurus of the Sakya School is thus that the lineage forks: I assume that it passed down to two main disciples of Sakya Pandita (perhaps to 15, Phakpa, and 15b, Tshokgom). I accordingly date the painting to the early to mid- fourteenth century (ca. 1320–1350). I estimate that the patron belonged roughly to the generation of Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen (1312–1375). But since no inscriptions identify the last lamas for certain, the dating remains a bit conjectural.

If the lineage does not fork, then one should number the last four figures in the second row as its continuation (i.e., as gurus number 16, 17, 18, and 19), which would push the dating two generations forward, to approximately 1375 to 1400 at the latest. But on the basis of its early style, the mandala can be dated to about the last half century of the Sakya/Yuan period. The number of lineal lamas after Sakya Pandita, no matter how we interpret them, would hardly support a dating to earlier than that.<sup>184</sup>

There is a problem if we identify the transmission as Dombhi Heruka’s

tradition: the painting does not portray the known lineage. This was a special lineage that the Tibetan translator Drokmi Lotsawa received not from Gayadhara but from his Indian guru Suravajra (Tib. dPa’ bo rdo rje). The Fifth Dalai Lama records his receiving this tradition in the Tibetan lineage of the great fifteenth-century ritual master of the Sakya School Gongkar Dorjedenpa, including its mandala liturgy and *sādhana* composed by Thekchen Chöje Kunga Tashi.<sup>185</sup> The Tibetan transmission as recorded there thus diverges from the main Path with the Fruit lineage both before Sachen and after Shang Dodepal (Zhang mDo sde dpal), though the number of generations of its teachers is roughly the same. So did the commissioners of the thangka make a mistake? Or have we linked this thangka with the wrong Hevajra transmission? Only further research will tell.

Figure 4.10 was introduced as an example of a painting wrongly identified as from the Sakya School. The lineal gurus that it portrays perhaps represented several traditions, including one for the Pacifying (Zhi byed) instructions of Phadampa Sanggye (d. 1117). The painting in some respects is not painted in a typical Beri style: note the multi-color stylized lotus-petal borders in several prominent places, here modified to look like strips of jewels. But the two standing bodhisattvas and the scrollwork on the white parts of the central stupa are both Newar-inspired, making its style basically Beri. I suspect the thangka may have been painted in western Tsang, i.e., relatively near Nepal. Phadampa had his main seat in Tingri in that district, and he passed away there as an old man on his last visit to Tibet.

Phadampa is portrayed in the third row as the third guru from the right. Without inscriptions to guide us and any similar paintings to compare, I find the structure of the painting impossible to sort out.<sup>186</sup> I suspect that two or three



lineages are portrayed. The larger guru in the stupa was presumably a very prominent Tibetan teacher of the traditions depicted, and the lama directly beneath him was his main successor. Despite the remaining puzzles, the painting is worth presenting here as an example of a Tibetan Beri style with a rare iconography, and it can be provisionally dated to about the fourteenth century.

To conclude this part of chapter 6, it is fair to say that during the blooming of the Beri in a period of Sakya/Yuan rule, the style gained in popularity among Tibetan patrons and painters. At the same time, the patronage of the old Eastern-Indian style diminished. As far as I can tell, that second style died out as a major style at about the same time, give or take a decade, that the new Phagmotru government established itself in Ü Province, as Sakya Monastery and Tsang Province ceased to function as seats of the national administration. With these momentous political events, the period of the Early Beri ended.

Yet we also know that some main elements of the old Pāla style might still be employed occasionally by a patron of later generations, who wished consciously to imitate the venerable style of his spiritual forefathers. See Figure 2.24, a painting from the late sixteenth century that did not, however, employ the traditional Pāla red and blue borders around its outer borders but used instead thin golden lines and wider red edges.

#### TRANSITIONAL STYLES IN FAR-WESTERN TIBET

Before moving on to the next period of the Beri, let us backtrack chronologically and briefly consider stylistic developments in western Tibet. The western-Tibetan styles form a series of transitional styles that begin as local

Pāla styles in about the 1220s, but within a few generations they develop into transitional regional styles with clear Pāla roots but that defy facile classification as either Pāla or Beri.

A few features that would be typical of Beri styles in central Tibet appear already in the murals of the Lhakhang Soma Temple at Alchi in Ladakh District of far-western Tibet (Ngari). This more recent temple at Alchi was previously dated to the early thirteenth century by Stoddard,<sup>187</sup> or to no later than the mid-thirteenth century by Pal.<sup>188</sup> In Figure 6.27 the presence of a main Kagyüpa lineage above the head of the prominent tutelary deity Hevajra allows this temple to be dated more precisely. The lineage, if it is the expected standard Drigung Kagyü one, continues one generation beyond Jigten Sumgön, probably down to his nephew Drigung Lingpa Sherab Jungnay (1187–1241). The latter is known to have traveled to western Tibet in the 1220s, staying seven years. The lineage thus allows the dating to be specified a little more precisely to about 1220 to 1250. Hence this “New Temple” (Soma = *gsar ma*, “new”) dates to only one or two generations later than the earlier Kashmiri-style temples of Alchi (painted about 1190 to 1210), though an enormous stylistic and iconographic gulf separates them.<sup>189</sup>

Figure 6.28 depicts a mural section in the Lhakhang Soma of Alchi, whose main figures are a central Buddha with two accompanying bodhisattvas. The style is in certain important respects more Pāla than Beri, with the uncovered knees and thighs of standing bodhisattvas, and thin, conical and widely separated golden jewel settings (fleurons) in the tiaras of peaceful deities. The standing bodhisattva attendants possess, more precisely, the typical Pāla-style “locked knees ..., their arched backs, and their bathing-suitlike *dhotis*.”<sup>190</sup>

In a few places, different zones of the painting are separated by the Pāla



FIG. 6.27  
Hevajra with Drigung Kagyü Lineage  
1220–1250  
Lhakhang Soma, Alchi, Ladakh  
Photograph by Lionel Fournier  
Literature: P. Pal 1982, plate LS15.



FIG. 6.28  
Central Buddha with Attendant  
Bodhisattvas  
1220–1250  
Lhakhang Soma, Alchi, Ladakh  
Photograph by Lionel Fournier  
Literature: P. Pal 1982, pl. LS12.



yellow-edged strips of tiny stylized square blue and red lotus petals (meant to show inlaid blue and red jewels with those shapes). But in most places the dividing strips are the plain yellow ones of the Beri. (Such simple lines as borders have been noted by C. Luczanits as a common feature of western-Tibetan paintings in this period, which differentiate them from central-Tibetan art.)<sup>191</sup> But note the tail of the mythical goose (*hamsa*) evolving into a series of three Pāla-style decorative bumps on either side of the head nimbus of the main figure. The Buddha's backrest shrine in this case has an outer decorative arch of *makaras* with two whorls of golden volutes each, which stop before the tails of the looping snakes that the *garuda* at the top grasps in his outstretched hands. (Both *makaras* stand on pillars that are almost completely obscured by the attendant bodhisattvas.) The edges of flames in other murals (as shown by Fig. 6.27), too, have become serrated, as in the Beri. In sum, these murals exemplify a late, provincial Pāla-influenced style of the third to fifth decade of the thirteenth century.

By contrast, Figure 6.29, a thangka of Vairocana from Spiti (dated by Klimburg-Salter to "12th/13th century"), possesses still more features of the Beri: the outer edges and dividing borders are strips of solid yellow, while the thighs of standing bodhisattvas are covered with striped *dhoti* lower garments.<sup>192</sup> Though this thangka was proposed to be a forerunner of the Lhakhang Soma murals, I think these features indicate that it is probably one or two generations later. It may date to the end of the period asserted by Klimburg-Salter, i.e., to about 1250 to 1300, but not much earlier.

Another relevant western Tibetan stylistic contrast is provided by the murals of Wanla in Ladakh. This somewhat lesser-known site has been dated to about 1300 to 1350. C. Luczanits in his brief article considered these murals to be no



longer the [old] western-Tibetan tradition, and that these murals were based on central-Tibetan [i.e., Pāla] thangka paintings, which are attested from the twelfth century onward. He assumes that the final shift in painting traditions from the earlier western style into that Pāla style must have occurred sometime in the middle of the twelfth century, when central Tibetan Kagyü Schools became dominant in western Tibet.<sup>193</sup>

The lineage of Wanla in Figure 6.30 continues three generations longer than the lineages portrayed in the Lhakhang Soma Temple of Alchi. Here we find a twelve-guru lineage above a panel dedicated to Śaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara. Assuming that it is a Drigung Kagyü lineage, that would date it to about the first three decades of the

FIG. 6.29  
Vairocana Surrounded by Buddhas  
Spiti; 1250–1300  
22 x 25 ½ in. (65 x 56 cm)  
The University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology 17461, Koelz Collection (K584)  
Literature: C. Copeland 1980, no. 70; and D. Klimburg-Salter 1997, fig. 1.





[F]

		1 Vairocana		
	2 Akṣobhya		3 Amitābha	
4 Ratnasambhava				5 Amoghasiddhi

FIG. 6.30  
Mural  
1300–1350  
Wanla, Ladakh  
Photograph Christian Luczanits  
Literature: C. Luczanits 2002, plate 35.

fourteenth century. But the lineage portrayed is clearly a main transmission of the Dakpo Kagyü, and Atiśa is not shown.<sup>194</sup> The columns of four-armed bodhisattvas face outward, not toward the central deity, while the five buddhas of the mandala above the main figure are ordered as in diagram [F].

Several key stylistic features, such as the throne backs with alternating inlaid blue and red jewels and the distinctly protuberant points on the ends of the plinths, prove to be of the Pāla style. Likewise, the tail of the *hamsa* goose atop the plinth develops into the typical outer fringe of the head nimbus consisting of a series of bumps.

An inscription states that the temple’s woodwork was “like Newar workmanship” (*bal po’i bzo dang mtshungs*). Luczanits rightly doubts that the paintings were also conceived after a Nepali model. The Wanla murals thus do exemplify a late, provincial, mainly Pāla-inspired style of early fourteenth-century western Tibet.

Figure 6.31 portrays Vajrasattva with Consort surrounded by numerous buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other deities. Both the main deity, white Vajrasattva, and his consort wear Indian apparel of royalty, manifesting themselves on the Sambhogakaya level of buddhahood. Vajrasattva sits, smiling gently, holding a vajra to his heart. His consort sits on his lap, embracing him from the side, her right hand draped over his shoulder. Together, they symbolize the highest union of the skillful means and insight of buddhahood.

Though the divine couple symbolizes unity through proximity, they

are not united physically as in the Anuttarayoga tantras. The seeming restraint of their pose was interpreted by one scholar to have been a conscious iconographic archaism of the painter.<sup>195</sup> Though such a way of positioning the main figure with consort is rarely encountered in fifteenth-century Tibet, it may be premature to judge such a usage as an archaism for the fourteenth century or in western Tibet.<sup>196</sup> The main subject matter of the thangka may have influenced its iconography, making it seem old fashioned to us. If the main subject of this thangka is the Medicine Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru and the other medicine buddhas, it belongs to a teaching cycle of the lowest class of tantra, the Kriyātantra. (The later Compendium of Tantras collection, for instance, classifies the 51-deity mandala of the Medicine Buddha as a Kriyātantra transmission.)<sup>197</sup> We cannot rule out that such a lower—and historically earlier within the development of Indian Buddhism—doctrinal context of the teaching may have encouraged or even prescribed such an archaic-looking positioning of the main figure’s consort. Indeed, all of the first three classes of tantra, i.e., up to and including Yogatantras, refrain from showing its deities in a pose of physical union.<sup>198</sup>

The same way of sitting with consort is also illustrated by one of the main figures in another painting from the same site in western Tibet (Fig. 6.34), which is also datable to about the mid-fourteenth century, though from the Sakya School. That thangka demonstrates that this usage was not extremely rare in that period in western Tibet, whatever its doctrinal or iconographic explanation may be.

Vajrasattva is considered in some tantric contexts to be the chief of a sixth buddha family (the Gnosis family), from which the other five buddha families emerge. P. Pal suggested that Vajrasattva was often considered the originator of a particular teaching, from which he





FIG. 6.31  
 Vajrasattva with Consort  
 Early 14th century  
 14 ½ x 12 ¾ in. (36.8 x 32.5 cm)  
 Zimmerman Family Collection  
 Literature: P. Pal 1984, pl. 17; J. Huntington  
 1990, no. 116; and P. Pal 1991, no. 82.

[G]									
4	5	6	7	3	8	9	10		11
14	12							13	16
15									17
18				1					22
19					2				23
20									24
21									25
26	27	28	29	30	31/32	34/33	35	36	37



deduced that this thangka might have been the first thangka of its set.<sup>199</sup> But Vajrasattva is perhaps better understood as symbolizing something more meta-physical, like the gnoseological matrix of buddhahood, and not its earliest historical embodiment, which was a role usually reserved for the primordial Buddha Vajradhara in depictions of lineages. In the sister thangka preserved at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Fig. 6.32), Vajradhara appears first, as primordial Buddha. Vajrasattva is present in the lineage, but he is second.<sup>200</sup>

Huntington has charted Figure 6.31 as shown in diagram [G].<sup>201</sup> Huntington identified the buddhas in the top row as the “Seven Mānuṣi Buddhas.”<sup>202</sup> I am not sure where he found that name, but he refers to the iconographic group of buddhas led by Buddha Śākyamuni who were known to Tibetans as the “Seven Heroic Buddhas,”<sup>203</sup> seven buddhas who according to tradition successively appeared in the human realm in normal “Nirmanakaya” bodies. Huntington noticed that something was amiss with the iconography of those buddhas as they are portrayed here, and he suggested by way of explanation that they were dual images, i.e., that the painter had combined two iconographically distinct groups of buddhas. Since such mixing of incompatible groups would be anathema to Buddhist patrons and painters alike, I would ask: Could the buddhas portray yet another group? One that comes to mind is the Seven Medicine Buddhas, which would agree with the presence of the main Medicine Buddha here on the top row as number 10.<sup>204</sup>

The previously unidentified multicolored buddha with a white face and dark body in the second row (number 13) can now be identified as Buddha Nāgeśvararāja (Klu dbang rgyal po). That buddha, together with his four companion bodhisattvas, formed another fixed grouping that also appears in some later pantheons.<sup>205</sup> Those five deities ev-

idently could be invoked to remove many specific worldly problems or obstacles. The only lineage I could find for the initiation and practices for Buddha Nāgeśvararāja and his four companion bodhisattvas (Tib. *Sangs rgyas klu dbang gi rgyal po gtso ‘khor lnga pa*) was in the lineage record of the Fifth Dalai Lama.<sup>206</sup> Two things to note about this lineage are that it is a Kadampa tradition of Narthang Monastery, and that one of its transmitters in the fourteenth century was a lama from Ngari Province (western Tibet). Coincidentally, the lineage begins the same as the first lineage in an early thangka from Spiti documented by D. Klimburg-Salter.<sup>207</sup>

It is good to trace the elusive Buddha Nāgeśvararāja and his lineage, but they are just tiny pieces in the larger art-historical puzzle, for Figure 6.31 does pose a number of vexing problems, both iconographic and stylistic. Note, for instance, that the main figure’s dark blue backrest cushion is filled with golden circles with dots in their middles and not the usual Newar scrollwork. Both P. Pal and J. Huntington have discussed the painting, and between them, Huntington devoted the most space to it, denying that it was painted in a primarily Pāla style.<sup>208</sup> He featured this thangka as painting number 116 in a catalog devoted to the Pāla style and its heirs outside India. When discussing the painting and its style at length, he classified it as Early Beri. While recognizing that it was heavily dependent on the Pāla style, he described several Nepalese stylistic features that he believed justified his judgment, including:

1. Dominance of red in the color scheme
2. Detail that is imprecise, bordering on crudeness
3. The hair and crown arrangement of Vajrasattva
4. A long, multicolored *dhōti* covering Vajrasattva’s legs.

In a previous entry of the same catalog, Huntington had specified two key elements that he held were found only in the art of Nepal and its Tibetan successors:<sup>209</sup>

1. The ornate arch above the throne back “with the tails of the *makaras* evolving into convoluted infoliated motifs and emitting the *naga* tails that flow into/out of the *kīrtimukha* face at the top of the configuration;” and
2. Turned up, pointed tips of horizontal architectural members in the temple and on the throne base and back.<sup>210</sup>

These elements, too, could have been listed here to strengthen Huntington’s case. Pal had listed only one or two of these characteristics (e.g., the ubiquitous color red) in his list of five key traits of the Beri in his book of 1984.<sup>211</sup> In a later response, Pal strongly took issue with one of Huntington’s characteristics, the alleged crudeness of detail in Nepali art, and it is true that Huntington should have omitted that reason. Pal agreed that some motifs and details from the Beri (or Newar) painting were present. Indeed, he considered the painting to embody “a synthesis of the two modes in a characteristically Tibetan manner.” But he still maintained the overall style to be Pāla.<sup>212</sup>

When Pal described Figure 6.31 (in Pal 1984 and 1991), he considered it together with a closely related painting from western Tibet that he knew from Los Angeles. The other painting from the group is Figure 6.32. Acquired in 1980 by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, that painting was described by Pal as painting number P3 of his catalog of 1983. Its structure can be shown as diagram [H], assuming that two lineages are shown and that the top row continues on the left-hand side. The first lineage begins: 1) Vajradhara, 2) Vajrasattva and 3) Vajrapāṇi, followed





FIG. 6.32  
 Buddhist Master with Lineages  
 Western Tibet; ca. 1300  
 17 ¾ x 15 ½ in. (45.1 x 38.4 cm)  
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
 M.80.188 (Purchased with funds from  
 Julian C. Wright Bequest)  
 Literature: P. Pal 1983 as plate 9 (P3).

[H]										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	1b							2b	4b	
12									5b	
13									6b	
14					3b				7b	
15									8b	
16									9b	
17									10b	
18	19	d1	offerings					8 patrons		



by 4) an unidentified yellow-hatted Indian pundit. He is succeeded by guru number 5, who is not wearing the robes of an Indian monk, and who might be a Tibetan translator. His disciple, number 6, is clearly a yoginī, who is followed in the lineage by another yellow-hatted pundit and three yoginīs. After them, the lineage is continued by monastically ordained lamas, presumably in the right or left column (in the chart I placed them to the left).

The remaining lineal gurus, i.e., the two gurus in the central box and those in the right vertical column (gurus 1b–10b), I have provisionally counted as a second lineage. I presume that this was a Kadampa tradition, based on the presence of an early pair of gurus within the inner square of the painting, numbers 1b and 2b, who resemble the usual depictions of Atiśa and Dromtön. Another small iconographical clue that may one day help to confirm or deny their Kadampa identity is the presence of a differently dressed guru in position 6b; he may turn out to be a Kadampa master of this generation who wore atypical long-sleeved dark robes.

The main figure of the painting may or may not belong to that lineage—without inscriptions one cannot be sure. But I have provisionally counted him as guru 3b, following the structural clue of the two gurus placed immediately above him in the inner box. A peculiarity of the main figure’s dress, if he portrays a lama, is that he wears no lama vest. But it seems that all the Tibetan lamas are so portrayed in this painting, even those appearing as minor figures. If our hypothetical Kadampa lineage is ten masters long (counting from Atiśa, guru 1b), that would bring the last lama down to about the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

D. Klimburg-Salter mentioned in passing this painting and its gurus 1b and 2b, correctly noting that they may depict Dromtön and Atiśa, explaining

Dromtön’s appearance as a long-haired Buddhist lay follower.<sup>213</sup> The inscribed Spiti thangka discussed by Klimburg-Salter that depicts Dromtön and Atiśa at the bottom continues the same line of gurus with a second yellow-hatted Indian pundit called by its inscription “Bodhisattva” (= the great Indian abbot Kamalaśīla), followed by a Tibetan king wearing a red or orange turban, though I cannot make out more details from the available illustration.<sup>214</sup> Thus there, too, a second lineage, consisting of the last five gurus portrayed in that row, may begin. (It is structurally unacceptable to paint those teachers at the bottom of a thangka, though their presence in such a position may also be a sign of antiquity.)

If Figure 6.32 depicts, as I suppose, a Kadampa tradition in the middle and on the right, the final guru (number 10b) would have flourished in about the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, i.e., in about 1290 to 1310. If the lineage is Kadampa but continues instead down the left-hand column, the number of generations from Atiśa rises from ten to twelve, and the dating would accordingly be two generations later.

In the 1980s, not many paintings datable to between 1230 and 1330 could be firmly attributed to western Tibet. The biggest and best accessible examples were a few later murals of Alchi in Ladakh and Tabo in Spiti. But one of the attractions of the present painting, Figure 6.32, both then and now, is that it belonged to a corpus of thangkas with a known provenance.

Pal discussed in some detail the existence of this group in connection with his painting P3 at Los Angeles, concluding that Figure 6.31 exemplifies the western Tibetan Pāla style.<sup>215</sup> Huntington dismissed Pal’s grounds for attributing that painting to western Tibet, believing that Pal had merely noted vague stylistic similarities with the Lhakhang Soma murals of Alchi.<sup>216</sup> Those murals Huntington considered a

pure Pāla style, as opposed to the mixed Pāla/Beri style that he held his painting number 116 (Fig. 6.31) to be.

But Figure 6.31 and about a half dozen other paintings were indeed brought from an abandoned cave monastery to the west of Mount Kailash in western Tibet, as Olschak and Wangyal explained when publishing some of the other paintings. These thangkas were found there by Augusto Gansser (or A. Gansser-Biaggi, b. 1910), a Swiss geologist who specialized in the geology of the Himalayas and who served for many years as professor at the University of Zurich. He visited the area in 1936 for an eight-month expedition, during which he circumambulated Mount Kailash and visited many other western Tibetan locales.<sup>217</sup> Two years later he published with Arnold Heim, his expedition partner, the book *The Throne of the Gods: An Account of the First Swiss expedition to the Himalayas* (London), which also recorded through a black and white photo the existence of cave murals in a side valley of the Sutlej River. (See Fig. 6.33.)

Gansser found the murals and thangkas about twenty kilometers southwest of Khyunglung in the Sibchu Valley, which he visited on August 13, 1936.<sup>218</sup> The detailed hiker’s handbook of Victor Chan confirms that at the confluence of the Sibchu and Tsumchu Rivers, about eight kilometers downstream from Sibchilim, is Pangtha, a large abandoned complex of a few hundred cave dwellings in two terraces.<sup>219</sup> In the upper terrace of caves, Chan reports that there was a monastery of the Sakya School with murals that once flourished in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.<sup>220</sup> This was the site visited and photographed by Gansser, which he believed was abandoned because of an insufficient water supply.

The nearby place Khyunglung was formerly a division of Dawa (mDa ba) administrative district (*dzong*), one of



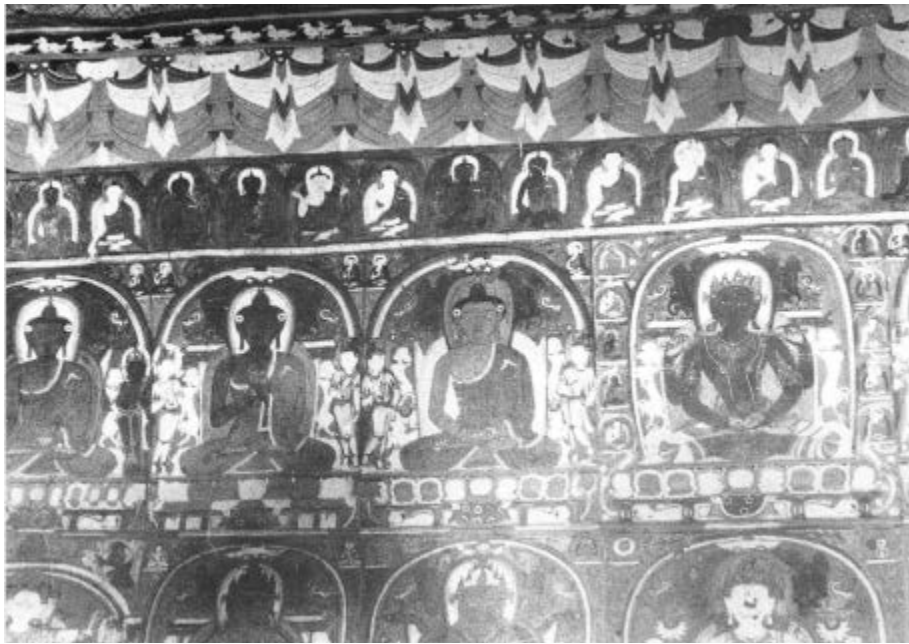


FIG. 6.33  
Murals of the Pangtha caves  
Ca. 13th or early 14th century  
Photograph by A. Gansser, 1936  
Literature: A. Heim and A. Gansser 1938,  
figure 166; and M. Henss 1996, figure 1.

three such districts of Guge before 1959, the other two districts being Tsarang and Ruthok.<sup>221</sup> Khyunglung is also shown between Tholing and Tise (Kailash) on a map in R. Vitali's history of Tholing in Guge.<sup>222</sup> Vitali elsewhere lists Khyunglung Monastery as a Geluk establishment. It was also the site of the ancient Khyunglung Ngükhar Temple, which was also a Bönpo sacred site, the area around Mount Kailash (Tise) being traditionally considered by the Bönpos as the heartland of their ancient Shangshung (Zhang zhung) kingdom, which was conquered by the Tibetan empire in the seventh century.<sup>223</sup> A recent exhibition catalog on Bönpo art in its map "Tibet, with emphasis on Bon historical locations" locates Khyunglung (Khyunglung Ngükhar) about forty-five kilometers east-southeast of Toling in Guge, and near Khyunglung at Gurugem, where a sole recent Bönpo monastery stood in the 1940s.<sup>224</sup>

Blanche Olschak and Geshe Thupten Wangyal, when describing paintings number 50, 51, 51a, and 52 in their book *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*, alluded to the paintings' origin in an abandoned grotto monastery of western Tibet.<sup>225</sup> They published four of these thangkas in color and described their iconographic content, without giving dimensions.<sup>226</sup>

A few years before Olschak and Wangyal's book, D. I. Lauf presented two paintings from the same Gansser group as black and white illustrations in a Swiss exhibition catalog of 1969.<sup>227</sup> One of these is Figure 6.34, which despite its rudimentary illustration reveals itself to be an appealing portrait probably of Sakya Pandita with lineage. This painting is worth mentioning here, since it contains four lineal lamas of a Sakyapa transmission after the main figure, Sakya Pandita (1182–1251). It is, hence, datable to about 1320 to 1350, and it is a witness to the presence of art of the Sakya School in the site visited by Gansser. The brief catalog description of Lauf (p. 68) did not mention the painting's size.

Olschak and Wangyal asserted that another of the Gansser paintings (Fig. 6.35) portrayed Khache Panchen



FIG. 6.34  
Sakya Pandita with Lineage  
Western Tibet; ca. 1320–1350  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: D. I. Lauf ed. 1969, number  
XIV/74.

Śākyaśrībhadra as its main subject, though not providing any basis for that identification.<sup>228</sup> A few years before them, Lauf had called the same figure just a "saint (?) with two accompanying bodhisattvas."<sup>229</sup> He gave the size of the painting as 39 x 46 cm, i.e., the same as two others from the group (Figures 6.31 and 6.32). The structure and some details of this thangka are also the same as in those two paintings.

Though Figure 6.35 is partly water damaged and was never properly illustrated either time that it was published, some of its essential contents can still be made out. If we look at its reproductions carefully, we can see that the two accompanying bodhisattvas in the painting are strikingly Pāla in dress and posture. The distinctive Pāla-style elements of the painting thus include: "the locked knees of the standing bodhisattva attendants, their arched backs, and their bathing-suitlike *dhotis*."<sup>230</sup>





FIG. 6.35  
Master with Lineage  
Western Tibet  
15  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 18  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (39 x 46 cm)  
Literature: D. I. Lauf ed. 1969, number  
XIII/73; Blanche Olschak and Geshe  
Thupten Wangyal 1973, p. 51; A. Heim and  
A. Gansser 2000, fig. 165.

Until now, I had strongly believed, based on several of its stylistic characteristics, that the painting of Vajrasattva (Fig. 6.31) should be classified as an Early Beri style of western Tibet. But we cannot simply overlook two obviously Pāla-style attendant bodhisattvas in another thangka of the set. Such attendant figures were previously considered to be a decisive Pāla stylistic clue at Alchi. Does not their presence here significantly tip the scales in favor of the Pāla style?<sup>231</sup>

These western-Tibetan thangkas also possess a few elements that became typical features of many subsequent Beri paintings of central Tibet. Yet some of these features were almost ubiquitous in Tibetan painting of the thirteenth cen-

tury. The virtually pan-Tibetan features included not only the expected “throne base with or pedestal with square compartments containing grinning lions, elephants, etc., the leogryphs and other animals flanking the sides of the throne, one placed on top of the other” but even “the *makara* on the horizontal tops of the throne with the *garuda* holding their tails.”<sup>232</sup>

When I examine the Vajrasattva painting again, with several main Beri elements in mind, I still find more that is Beri than Pāla, including the teardrop-shaped jewel settings in Vajrasattva’s golden tiara and the Beri-style ends of the plinth behind the main figure. Were these, too, pan-Tibetan or pan-Indian elements in about 1300? I doubt it. If these early fourteenth-century thangkas, with their (to my eyes) subtle yet abundant Beri elements, do not yet embody a true Beri style, when do the western-Tibetan styles make that jump? I believe they must have made the fundamental shift by the mid-fourteenth century, as everywhere else in Tibet. If these paintings are not clear-cut examples of either style, it may be that they embody a mixture or transition. (Within its set, the Vajrasattva painting, oddly enough, seems to incorporate more Beri elements, and the other paintings fewer.)

D. Klimburg-Salter on one occasion observed that “from a strictly historical perspective, Nepali art of the 12th–14th centuries is also essentially post-Pāla.”<sup>233</sup> This may be a truism, but it is a helpful one, and it should be kept in mind by anyone trying to differentiate the stylistic allegiances of paintings from sister Tibetan painting traditions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, whether Pāla or Beri, especially in western Tibet. The Gansser paintings, for their part, do not seethe with obvious Newar elements. In western Tibet, such more pronounced Nepalese elements were not widely introduced in the fourteenth century, though many less obvi-





FIG. 6.36  
Avalokiteśvara of the Six-syllable Mantra  
Ca. 14th century  
Par caves, Zada District, Western Tibet  
Literature: D. Pritzker 2000, p. 131, fig. 2.

syllable Mantra seems fairly orthodox and not provincial among Beri paintings of western Tibet.

More elaborate and distinctly Newar (or full-blown Beri) elements jump out from western Tibetan murals and thangkas only later, beginning in the fifteenth century and continuing for a century or so (see, for instance, Fig. 7.29). The extraordinary western-Tibetan styles at Tholing and Tsaparang of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, which some have called a Guge style, could certainly be called western-Beri styles. The delayed acceptance of more strongly Newar-influenced Beri style by the patrons and painters of those distant western border regions in the fourteenth century may reflect cultural conservatism.<sup>235</sup> But if so, it proved to be a wonderfully fecund ground for later developments.

ous ones were. The western-Tibetan painting styles of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries also lacked certain classic markers of the central-Tibetan Pāla styles such as jeweled border strips, which made the stylistic gulf easier to bridge in Ngari Province, in that respect.

But before we can generalize, we will need to compare all surviving Beri murals in western Tibet, including the murals of the Par caves (Fig. 6.36). They seem to represent a Beri style of the next phase and the following, i.e., fourteenth century. This painting survives in a group of mural painting in Guge District of western Tibet, as briefly documented a decade ago by David Pritzker. The murals were found in a complex of caves just north of Par village in Zada District, southwest of Tsarang at about 4,100 meters elevation. Though no inscriptions have yet confirmed a dating, on the basis of style the murals can be tentatively dated to between 1300 and 1400.<sup>234</sup> The depiction of Avalokiteśvara of the Six-







FOR ABOUT ONE CENTURY, from roughly the 1360s to 1450s, the Beri style flourished as the sole painting style in Tibet after the Eastern-Indian style disappeared.<sup>236</sup> The beginning of this period coincided in Tibet approximately with the collapse of Yuan-supported Sakya rule and the establishment of the new Phagmotru government through Changchub Gyaltsen's revolt in the 1350s. (The Yuan dynasty officially ended in 1368.) Oddly enough, the Beri style thus seems to have replaced the other styles in about the 1350s or 1360s, at the *end* of the Yuan-supported rule and not during it. Hence, the establishment of the Beri as a universal style could not have been decreed by the Sakya or the Yuan court. In this respect, too, the previous assumptions about the relations between the Beri and the Sakya School were too simplistic.

This next period witnessed movements of monastic renewal that were led, outside the Sakya School, by Tsongkhapa, and, within the Sakya School, by the illustrious Ngorchen. After many decades of glorious art, the Beri eventually lost its status as the universal style and was displaced through the "landscape revolution" of the mid-to-late fifteenth century led by such artists as Menthanga and Khyentse Chenmo.

#### THANGKAS WITH LINEAGES OR DATABLE FIGURES

Figure 7.1 probably dates to about 1360 to 1390, the beginning of the Universal Beri style. This magnificent thangka portrays as its main figure the peaceful goddess Uṣṇīṣavijāyā (Victorious Lady of the [Buddha's] Head Protuberance). She is shown within a stupa, which stands in a shrine atop which seven further smaller stupas are present. The backrest arch elements behind the main deity are very complex, including a series of four different mythical animals and their convoluted tails. The arch behind them has eleven lobes, including a tiny lobe at the top to accommodate the topmost tip of the stupa spire. The backrest behind that includes a multitiered temple with seven smaller stupas on its roof.

The painting is extremely rich iconographically, depicting in the top row a line of gurus and along the bottom row various deities and the patron. The right and left columns of buddhas and an additional horizontal row just below the main figure together portray the thirty-five Buddhas of Confession. Meanwhile, in triangular areas above the small stupas to both right and left, tantric adepts are portrayed within a craggy complex of caves on both sides: Virupa and his various aspects or life-episodes depicted in caves to our left and the Eight Great Adepts, to our right. These details are masterfully rendered, taking care to overlap further elements with closer ones to create the illusion of depth, such as the crags with the tips of the stupas,

and the lamas sitting in aracatures (arched passageways) above with the tips of the rocky crags.

The row of thirteen lineage masters along the top follows an alternating sequence shown in diagram [A]. Numbers 3 through 6 are Indian pundits. Numbers 7 through 9 depict Tibetan lay masters, while numbers 10 through 13 are Tibetan monks.

That lineage seems to continue for three teachers after the first monk among the Sakya founding masters (Sakya Paṇḍita), indicating a dating to the early or mid-fourteenth century. But if one takes into account numbers 14 and 15—the two small figures below the top row, to the right and left of the topmost small stupa, who also seem to be Tibetan monks in the role of gurus—that would continue the lineage for two additional generations, resulting in a dating to about 1360 to 1390. (Note that the alcoves and some other details are very similar to a mandala thangka set dating to the late 1370s or 1380s. See Figure 7.2 and diagram [B]. See also other published examples from the set in P. Pal 1984, numbers 29–31.) If this lineage is the one shown in Ngorchen's *Record of Teachings Received*, then the patron would belong to the generation of number 17, Sazang Mati Panchen (Sa bzang Ma ti Paṇ chen, 1294–1376), who flourished two generations before Ngorchen.<sup>237</sup>

Figure 7.2 depicts a superb thangka that portrays the twenty-five-deity mandala of Buddhakapāla with a lineage. Dating to the late fourteenth century, it

Detail of Fig. 7.5





FIG. 7.1  
Uṣṇīṣavijāyā  
Ca. 1360–1390  
33 x 26 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (84 x 67 cm)  
Musée Guimet MA 5195,  
Fournier Donation  
Literature: G. Béguin 1995, no. 138.

[A]

12 10 8 6 4 2 1 3 5 7 9 11 13  
(14) (15)

belongs to a twenty-seven-painting set of the Vajrāvalī in which Beri mandala painting reaches an apogee.

An inscription under the mandala at the front identifies the subject of the painting as: “The fifteenth mandala, the twenty-five-deity mandala of Buddha-kapāla, surrounded by the deities of two types of Cakrasamvara” (*dkyil ‘khor bco lnga pa sangs rgyas thod pa lha nyer lnga’i dkyil ‘khor la bde mchog gnyis kyis lhas skor ba*). The main subject and its place within the set is confirmed by an identifying inscription in on the upper-right corner of the back side of the mount, which states: “25-deity mandala of Buddhakapāla” (*bco lnga pa sangs rgyas thod pa lha nye lnga*). The painting seems to have preserved its original silk mount and thangka mounting stick.

Though various datings have been hazarded for this set, the mystery can be definitively solved only by examining the whole set. It was commissioned in honor of one of the most outstanding religious luminaries of that period, the remarkable Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltshen (1312–1375), an idealist born in the Sakya Khön family who left the leadership of the great seat of Sakya and its political entanglements so that he could lead a more genuinely religious life. He fled several times to avoid summons to teach at the Yuan imperial court. Near universal acclaim caught up with him later in life, after the Sakya government had been overthrown and the Phagmotrupa government established. Called *Drung chos kyi rje pa* (which could be roughly rendered “His excellence, Lord of Dharma”) in this painting, he was in the early 1370s one of the most esteemed religious masters as far as many of the most influential members of the usurping government—the Phagmotrupa court—were concerned.

This sumptuous painting was commissioned in that lama’s honor and memory by one of the leading





FIG. 7.2  
Mandala of Buddhakapāla from the Vajrāvālī  
with Lineage  
1375–1390  
28  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 32  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (73 x 83.5 cm)  
Private Collection, Switzerland  
Photograph © by Hughes Dubois, Brussels

[B]	6	5	4	3	2	1	14	7	8	9	10	11	12/13
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FIG. 7.3 (also discussed as Fig. 2.6)  
Mandala of Yogāmbara with Lineal Gurus  
1375–1390s  
33  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 28  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (ca. 85 x 73.5 cm)  
Collection of Michael Henss, Zurich  
Literature: Galerie Robert Burawoy 1978,  
[no. 3].

dignitaries of the Phakmotrupa court, a patron who is portrayed at the bottom of every painting. Only one thangka provides his name: the second in the set, that for the mandala of Guhyasamāja Akṣobhyavajra. There he is called by his title Dzongji Chenpo, which is enough to identify him as Dzongji Gyaltsen Zangpo (rGyal mtshan bzang po), a powerful court functionary who seems to have been a bulwark of political strength for the Phagmotrupa regime

during a period of weak rulers in the 1370s and 1380s.<sup>238</sup>

The painting does not depict specifically the lineage for the initiation into the twenty-five-deity mandala of Buddhakapāla, which Butön records separately, a lineage from Marpa and Palden Sengge (dPal ldan seng ge).<sup>239</sup> Instead, it depicts the lineage for the whole forty-two initiations of the Vajrāvalī that Butön received as a group from Palden Sengge. Since I could not decipher all the inscriptions under lineage masters on this painting, I have supplemented a few illegible names within square brackets from Butön's record of teachings received.<sup>240</sup> The lineage diagram is shown as [B].

1. rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara)
2. rDo rje rnal 'byor ma (Vajrayoginī)

3. A bhya ka ra gupta (Abhayākara Gupta)
4. Na ya ka pa (Nāyakapa)
5. [Da sha ba la śrī] (Daśabalaśrī)
6. [Bi khyā ta de ba] (Vikhyātadeva)
7. Paṇ chen Śākyaśrī [Kha che Paṇ chen Śākyaśrībhadra]
8. [Bhūmi śrī] (Bhūmiśrī)
9. [Bi ma la śrī] (Vimalaśrī)
10. Lotsawa Trakgyal (Lo tsā ba Grags rgyal, i.e., Yar lung Lo tsā ba Grags pa rgyal mtshan)
11. Chokdenpa (mChog ldan pa, i.e., Lo tsā ba mChog ldan)
12. Paldenpa (dPal ldan pa, i.e., dPal ldan seng ge)
13. Dharma Lord Butön (Chos rje Bu ston)
14. Drung chos kyi rje pa

Lama Dampa was thus the direct disciple of Butön of Shalu for this lineage. Lama Dampa had close familial ties with Shalu and Butön's noble patrons there, since his mother was a noble lady of Shalu.

Note that according to Butön's *Record of Teachings*, guru number 11 should be Dükhorwa Sherab Sengge (Dus 'khor ba Shes rab seng ge), who has been accidentally omitted in the painting.<sup>241</sup> Butön then lists two other lineages from the subsequent guru, Lotsawa Chokden (Lo tsā ba mChog ldan).

Figure 7.3 is a second example of a mandala from this superb set. I briefly alluded to the lineal structure of this thangka above (see Fig. 2.6). This painting, like the entire set, was commissioned in honor of Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen, evidently not long after his death in 1375. That lama appears again in the middle of the top row (guru number 19), referred to once more as "His excellence, the Lord of Dharma" (*drung chos kyi rje pa*). The lineage of teachers is, according to the inscriptions:

1. Vajradhara Yogāmbara (rDo rje 'chang rNal 'byor nam mkha')



2. Vajrapāṇi (Phyag na rdo rje)
3. Nāgārjuna (Klu sgrub)
4. Āryadeva (Ārya de ba)
5. Tilopa (Te lo pa)
6. Naropa (Na ro pa)
7. Marpa Lotsawa (Mar pa Lo tstsha)
8. Ngok Chödor (rNgog Chos rdor, i.e., rNgog Chos sku rdo rje)
9. Ngok Shedang Dorje (rNgog Zhe sdang rdo rje)
10. Ngok Thokme Trakpa (rNgog Thogs med grags pa, 1120–1156)<sup>242</sup>
11. Gyaltsa Dorseng (rGyal tsha rDor seng, i.e., rDo rje seng ge, 1152–1219, son of rNgog Thogs med grags pa)
12. Gyaphowa Lungpa Yönten Trak (rGya pho ba lung pa Yon tan grags)
13. Chötrak (Chos grags, i.e., Bar thang pa Chos grags)
14. Shakshön (Shāk gzhon, i.e., Shākya gzhon nu)
15. Loden (Blo ldan, i.e., lCe Blo ldan seng ge?)
16. Phakö ('Phags 'od, i.e., Slob dpon 'Phags pa 'od Yon tan rgya mtsho)
17. Dharma Lord Butön (Chos rje Bu ston, i.e., Bu ston Rin chen grub, 1290–1364)
18. rTsa ba'i bla ma
19. Drung chos kyi rje pa

We should note the peculiarity that someone called “personal guru” (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*) appears as guru number 18, just before Lama Dampa. My supposition is that Lama Dampa may have been meant in both positions, once as Butön's disciple (with name not specified) and again above as chief guru of the patron.

This thangka depicts the fifty-three deity mandala of Yogāmbara (*rnal 'byor nam mkha' nga gsum ma*) as the sixteenth painting in a set of Vajrāvalī mandalas. The inscription at the bottom middle states as much.<sup>243</sup> The present lineage was transmitted to Tibet by Marpa the Translator (Mar pa Lo tsā ba) and the Ngok (rNgog) tradition (whose history is recounted at some length by



Gö Lotsawa in his *Blue Annals*).<sup>244</sup> It was bestowed by Butön of Shalu, though in his record of teachings received, an additional figure, Jñānaḍākiṇī (*ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma*), is listed between Vajrapāṇi and Nāgārjuna.<sup>245</sup> This was the lineage for the *Catuhpitha* (*rDo rje gdan bzhi*) initiation and for such teachings as the treatise on a related theme entitled *rNal 'byor nam mkha'i sgo sbrag* by Namgyal Pawo (rNam rgyal dpa' bo). Butön's biography records that he invited this master from Kyikhar (sKyi 'khar) to Shalu for Guhyasamāja and Pañcakrama yoga instructions,<sup>246</sup> including Guhyasamāja according to the tradition of Ngok and the Yogāmbara.<sup>247</sup>

Figure 7.4 can also be provisionally dated on stylistic grounds to about the same period, the late fourteenth century. It lacks identifying inscriptions, but based on similarities with a statue like-

FIG. 7.4  
Two Eminent Monks, with Episodes from a Saintly Life  
Ca. late 14th century  
28 3/8 x 32 1/4 in. (72 x 82 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: A. Heller 1999, p. 85f., no. 64.

wise not inscribed, the main figure to the viewer's left was tentatively identified as the great master Butön Rinchen Drup. The other main master was accordingly presumed to be Butön's chief disciple and successor at Shalu.<sup>248</sup>

The painting shows the first episodes of some great saint's life—his birth—at top center and depicts childhood experiences to the left of those. The next episodes show the main subject of the hagiography quickly becoming a learned monk and then wearing a slightly pointed red pundit's hat in most





FIG. 7.4A  
Detail from Fig. 7.4

of the remaining episodes (though Butön is traditionally said to have worn a yellow hat). The blue-tiled temple with a golden pagoda roof might be Shalu, if Tibet is portrayed. But it is very odd that blue pagoda roofs are shown already in the birth and childhood episodes of the master's life.

For these reasons, we should doubt the identification of the painting's subject as Butön with episodes of his life. If we carefully examine the monastic dress of the main figure, one peculiarity is readily apparent: the master does not wear a normal Tibetan lama's vest. In fact, he is dressed like an Indian monk. If one takes into account his unusual physiognomy—with foreign-looking features—one begins to wonder whether that master could be an Indian Buddhist monk who here is depicted together with an eminent Tibetan monk-disciple. He

holds a small black begging bowl on his lap and a Sanskrit manuscript (*pustaka*) to his heart in the gesture of teaching (Fig 7.4a). (Such Indian books are smaller than the usual Tibetan books and otherwise distinctive.)

One learned Indian monk who might be depicted here as the first main figure is Śākyaśrībhadrā (1140s–1225), the great pundit of Kashmir, who came with an entourage of lesser Indian Buddhist pundits to Tibet as an invited guest in the first decade of the thirteenth century, not long after they had fled from the Buddhist heartland to the eastern borderlands of India.<sup>249</sup> G. Tucci has studied another, slightly earlier painting of the life of Śākyaśrībhadrā.<sup>250</sup> Its thirty-one episodes illustrate a brief versified eulogy and biography written by his disciple and translator Trophu Lotsawa (Khro phu Lo tsā ba Byams pa dpal, b. 1172 or 1173), which should also be compared here. The thangka studied by Tucci does not show the subject's entire life, but only thirty or thirty-

five episodes relating to his life while still in India. Thus, if the subject of Figure 7.4 is Śākyaśrībhadrā (or Khache Panchen), we should not be surprised if it likewise omits later episodes from his career, such as traveling to Tibet at the invitation of Trophu Lotsawa, teaching there for about a decade, founding an important monastic community, and finally returning to Kashmir, where he passed away in 1225. (The repeated occurrence of pagoda roofs in every scene and the absence of recognizably Tibetan scenes lead me to conclude that most of the episodes depict occurrences in India.) In the painting studied by Tucci, the main figure looks similar, though he is older: he does not wear a Tibetan lama vest or pundit hat and can be seen to have a "slightly naturalistic bump on his bald pate."<sup>251</sup>

Śākyaśrībhadrā was famed for his daily use of his begging bowl when begging for alms, which he continued to do his whole life (hence his sobriquet "the great almsman," *bsod snyoms pa chen po*). One episode of the thirty-four (of thirty-eight) verses by Trophu Lotsawa that Tucci presents as number 25 agrees with the episode in Figure 7.4 that is depicted fourth from the bottom in the right column.<sup>252</sup> Here we see armed soldiers attacking a Buddhist vihara (monastery), with the saint escaping to the left as if guided by a vision of the goddess Green Tara. In a scene just below this, we find scene number 24 in Tucci, in which the great master, much earlier, at the time of his monastic ordination, has a vision in which he sees Maitreya, the Buddha Śakyamuni, and Tara on the tips of three burning offering lamps.<sup>253</sup> These, too, fit perfectly if the subject is Śākyaśrībhadrā, and very similar depictions of the same two episodes can be found in about the same location of the painting studied by Tucci. A glance at some of the other episodes reveals that their subject matter and order are the same in both paint-



ings, leading me to conclude that both derived from the same original.

If the first main figure is Śakyaśrībhadra, we can deduce that the second main figure is probably one of his main monastically ordained Tibetan disciples, i.e., one of the early Tibetan abbots of the important tradition of Vinaya observance that he established, which gradually developed into the four monastic communities usually just called the “Four Assemblies” (*tshogs pa bzhi*).<sup>254</sup> That second figure has more typical Tibetan facial features and bodily is much larger than his teacher. He, too, does not wear a lama vest, but that would be in keeping with his strict adherence to the monastic rules as one of the key early abbots of his tradition. A label on the back identifies the painting as to be hung “second on the left” (Tib. *g.yon gnyis pa*), i.e., second to the right for a normal viewer, which marks this painting as the fifth *thangka* in a multi-painting set. If the abbots of Śakyaśrībhadra’s ordination lineage are shown in pairs as the main figures in a set of *thangkas*, the painting depicting Śakyaśrībhadra and his disciple Dorje Pal (rDo rje dPal), who are normally counted twelfth and thirteenth abbots in the lineage, would be the seventh *thangka*, which would be hung not second but third to the left.

Stylistically, the painting displays some characteristics of a high Beri style of the late fourteenth century, including an almost square shape. The pillars supporting the upper elements of the backrest arch issue from the traditional vase and have two segments. Atop the pillars sit *hamsas* (geese), who unfurl their elegant tails toward the *nagas* and *garudas* higher in the backrest arch. The golden flames of head and body nimbus are very intricately done.

The painting depicts episodes from a great master’s life in the series of alternating red and blue rectangles around the outer borders, typical of narrative

paintings of the fourteenth century. A. Heller held it to be one of the oldest extent biographical paintings and roughly contemporaneous with the other depiction of Śakyaśrībhadra. Certainly this is one of the finest surviving early painted biographies. But I believe that the five monks depicted below Śakyaśrībhadra in the other biographical painting portray a series of Tibetan abbots and indicate a dating that is a little earlier than the dating proposed for this painting.<sup>255</sup>

Figure 7.5 portrays the abbot and Vinaya master Khenchen Tashi Tshultrim together with his lineage of full monastic ordination. That master led the ceremony when Sharchen Yeshe Gyaltsen (Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan, d. 1406), a great lama of the Sharpa lama palace in Sakya, received full monastic ordination. The significance of this *thangka* is that it also represents the ordination lineage of Sharchen’s disciple Ngorchen, though ending a generation before him. The painting can thus be dated to about the last two decades of the fourteenth century or the first decade of the fifteenth.

The throne back of the principal figure is intricate, with four animals stacked one upon the other on the side as a sort of pillar: elephants, lions, *shangs shangs* bird-men, and leogryphs. (See detail at the beginning of this chapter.) Three more animals appear above, including one (*makaras*) with voluted golden tails, culminating in the pink snake-eating *garuda* at the top.

The patron expresses the greatest respect and gratitude when he mentions Tashi Tshultrim’s name, and though such expressions occasionally became a trope, they give the unmistakable impression that the painting was commissioned by a devoted disciple. An inscription could be read at the bottom of the front side, though it is partly illegible, and I could not make out any name of a patron.<sup>256</sup> In any case, this painting, if it was not commissioned by

Ngorchen’s guru Sharchen, was commissioned by another lama of the same generation and from a similarly high religious milieu.

The master Tashi Tshultrim was the leader of one of the four monastic assemblies that became established in Tibet in the tradition founded by Khache Panchen Śakyaśrībhadra (Fig. 7.4a). The main line of masters represented the Great Assembly (Tshogs chen) or Neudongtse Assembly (Ne’u gdong rtse tshogs pa), the monastic community next to the Phagmotru capital, which is listed as first of the “Four Assemblies” by Gö Lotsawa in his *Blue Annals*.<sup>257</sup>

The painting has the structure shown in diagram [C]. Most gurus in the *thangka* are identifiable through inscriptions:

- A. Khenchen Changchup Pal Zangpo (mKhan chen Byang chub dpal bzang po)
- B. Khenchen Shergönpa (mKhan chen Sher mgon pa)
- C. Chöje Sönam Gyaltsen (Chos rje bSod nams rgyal mtshan)
  1. [Buddha Śākyamuni]
  2. Sha ri bu (Śāriputra)
  3. Sras sGra can ‘dzin (Rāhula the Buddha’s Son)
  4. Bram ze sGra can ‘dzin (Rāhula the Brahmin)
  5. Klu sgrub (Nāgārjuna)
  6. Gu ṇa mi tra (Guṇamitra)
  7. Rin chen bshes gnyen (\*Ratnamitra)
  8. Chos kyi bzang po (Dharmabhadra)
  9. Gu ṇa pa ti
  10. Chos kyi phreng [ba]
  11. ‘Byung gnas sbas pa (Akaragupta)
  12. Paṇ chen Shākya shrī (Śakyaśrībhadra)
  13. Dorje Pal (rDo rje dpal)
  14. Öser Pal (\*‘Od zer dpal)
  15. Sönam Pal (bSod nams dpal)
  16. [Khenchen Tashi Tshultrim (mKhan chen bKra shis tshul khirms)]
  17. Lobpön Tshulbum (Slob dpon Tshul ‘bum)





FIG. 7.5  
Khenchen Tashi Tshultrim and His  
Ordination Lineage  
1390–1410  
14  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 11  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (36.5 x 29.5 cm)  
The John and Berthe Ford Collection,  
promised gift to the Walters Art Museum  
Literature: S. Huntington and J. Huntington  
1990, no. 122; and P. Pal 2001, no. 142.

Ngorchon records his own full ordination through this lineage, of which I recapitulate here just the end, starting with guru number 12, Khache Panchen, who brought the lineage to Tibet when he came at the invitation of Trophu Lotsawa:<sup>258</sup>

12. Paṇḍi ta Chen po Shākya shrī (Śākyaśrībhadra)
13. Khenchen Dorje Palwa (mKhan chen rDo rje dpal ba)
14. Khenchen Öser Palwa (mKhan chen 'Od zer dpal ba)
15. Khenchen Sönam Pal (mKhan chen bSod nams dpal)
16. Khenchen Tashi Tshultrim (mKhan chen bKra shis tshul khrims)
17. Chöje Yeshe Gyaltsen Pal Zangpo (Chos rje Ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po)
18. Ngorchon

In the thangka, gurus A, Khenchen Changchup Palzangpo, and B, Khenchen Shergönpa, do not appear in the actual ordination lineage of Yeshe Gyaltsen. Guru A, Khenchen Changchup Palzangpo, was another great master of monastic discipline contemporaneous with number 13, Dorje Pal (rDo rje dpal), while number 16, Khenchen Shergönpa (mKhan chen Sher mgon pa, = Shes rab mgon po), succeeded number 15, Sönam Pal, as abbot of the Drachi Tsongdü (Grwa phyi Tshong 'dus) monastic community or Che (Bye) Community, which was mentioned as the second community by Gö Lotsawa in his *Blue Annals*.<sup>259</sup>

[C]								
1	B2	B3	B4		B5	B6	B7	B8
2								C
3		A				B		4
5								6
7								8
9				16				10
11								12
13								14
15								17
[Patron]								



Guru C, Chöje Sönam Gyaltsen, is also not in the Vinaya ordination lineage. He is probably the illustrious Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen (Bla ma Dam pa, 1312–1375), who is nearly ubiquitous in lineages of the Sakya School. Similarly, guru number 17, Lobpön Tshulbum, is not in the ordination lineage. He can be identified as Lobpön Tshulbum (sLob dpon Tshul ‘bum), short for the Denödzinpa Tshultrim Bum (sDe snod ‘dzin pa Tshul khriims ‘bum), a learned master of scripture who taught two Mahayana scholastic treatises to Sharchen Yeshe Gyaltsen. He appears twice in Ngorchen’s record of teachings received as a disciple of Butön or of the scholar Dharma Shrī Bhadra, who was a learned disciple of Butön.

Figure 7.6 depicts a mandala of Hevajra with lineage masters of the Sakya School. As alluded to in connection with Figure 3.6, preliminary documentation of this thangka was provided by J. Huntington.<sup>260</sup> The bottom edge of the painting contains a colophon-like inscription that is decisive for dating it. After a few corrections of faulty readings, it can be seen to record that its patron was Sharchen Yeshe Gyaltsen Pal Zangpo, one of the main gurus of Ngorchen, and that the painting was made in memory of his late guru Palden Tshultrim.<sup>261</sup>

The identities of gurus 18 and 19 in Huntington’s list are crucial for confirming the dating of the painting and linking its patron to his lineage. Based on the lineage record of Ngorchen, the lama called “18. Chos rje bla ma” by Huntington is clearly identifiable as Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen (Bla ma Dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, 1312–1375) of Sakya, not Khyenrab Chöje of Shalu and Nalendra. Moreover, guru number 19, “Bla ma dpal ...” can be identified as Sharchen’s guru Palden Tshultrim (dPal ldan tshul khriims).<sup>262</sup> Ngorchen in his record of teachings received mentions that some records begin



FIG. 7.6  
Mandala of Hevajra  
Ca. 1400  
31 ½ x 28 7/16 in (80 x 71 cm)  
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts  
From the Berthe and John Ford Collection,  
purchased with funds provided by the  
Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund, the  
Kathleen Boone Samuels Fund, and the  
Robert A. and Ruth Fisher Fund, 91.509  
Literature: S. and J. Huntington 1990,  
no. 118.

the same as the Path with the Fruit lineage (as in the thangka?) and continue in that lineage down to Sachen, but that this is incorrect.<sup>263</sup> The fact that this thangka contains that rejected version of the lineage may be additional proof that it dates from before Ngorchen. The lineage of the five lamas of Genpa (Gan pa) is rare in Ngorchen’s record of teachings received. The record of teachings of the Fifth Dalai Lama confirms the lineage down to Ngorchen and provides two continuations.<sup>264</sup>

Figure 7.7 portrays the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī as its main figure, surrounded by gurus, great Indian scholastic masters, and various other enlightened beings. This painting is in several respects a puzzle. To begin with, its lineage seems to be incomplete, so it is not a straightforward guide to dating the painting. (Cf. the stylistically similar Figure 7.8, which apparently dates to the

fifteenth century.) The structure of the first two lines is shown in diagram [D].

Rhie and Thurman attributed this thangka to the Kadampa Order, believing that guru number 1 was Atiśa, and hence that the second was Dromtön.<sup>265</sup> But number 2 wears a white robe, for which the early Sakya founders, from Sachen to Drakpa Gyaltsen, were well known. Moreover, guru number 3 is a typical early representation of Sakya Pandita, who is distinctive as the first Tibetan to wear a pundit’s hat (red with rounded top). If this is a painting of the Sakya School, as seems more likely, guru number 4 would be Sakya Pandita’s nephew and main disciple, Chögyal Phakpa.

The iconography of the painting is in some other ways mysterious. The eight minor figures in the vertical columns below guru numbers 3 and 4 are not Tibetan lamas, though they seem at first glance to be. They actually depict the fixed iconographic grouping of eight outstanding Indian masters of scholastic Buddhism known as the Six Ornaments and Two Supreme Ones (*rgyan drug mchog gnyis*). All wear red robes and seven wear yellow pundit hats, which mark them as Indian monks and scholastic monks, respectively. Nāgārjuna’s depiction should have been completed with a fringe of snake hoods around his head, and one can see that something special was painted behind his head instead of the usual halo. Note that the Tibetan monks Sakya Pandita and Chögyal Phakpa are shown wearing an orange outer robe—a garment not worn in India—and also with an upper monk’s vest.<sup>266</sup> If one carefully examines the dress of the last seven of the Six Ornaments and Two Supreme Ones, one finds that they have been wrongly painted as wearing Tibetan monk vests. What could account for this wrong iconography? Did the original painter misunderstand what he was painting, or was this added by a later painter or





FIG. 7.7  
Mañjuśrī  
Late 14th or early 15th century  
19 x 15 ½ in. (48.26 x 39.37cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.163 (HAR 154)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 30.

[D]	1	B1	B2	B3	B4	2
	3	b1			b2	4





FIG. 7.8  
Six-armed Mahākāla with Lineage  
15th century  
32 ¼ x 24 in. (81.9 x 62.9 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2002.34.4 (HAR 65165)  
Literature: R. Linrothe and J. Watt eds.  
2004, fig. 2.18

[E]	10	8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9	11
	12										13
	14	18								19	15
	16										17

restorer? I cannot answer, nor can I be sure who the first Indian pundit (number 1 in the first row) was, though he wears red monk's robes and yellow pundit's hat like seven out of the eight other outstanding Indian masters shown below (Nāgārjuna does not). He may be an important Indian master in the transmission of the initiation for Orange Mañjuśrī ('Jam dbyangs dmar ser) such as Vajrāsanapāda (rDo rje gdan pa), the Indian scholar and tantric adept of Bodhgaya who transmitted the teachings to Bari Lotsawa, who gave it, in turn, to Sachen, spiritual forefather of the lamas of Sakya.

The style of the painting dates it to about the fourteenth century, and its short lineage (which ends with Chögyal Phakpa, d. 1280) shows that it cannot date earlier than the 1260s. The head nimbus and blue backrest of the main figure are too abraded to reveal much of their original ornamentation, but the tiny, elegant scrollwork of some of the minor figures (e.g., of Maitreya) can still be made out. The backrest arch includes geese and *shangs shangs* bird-men unfurling their elaborately voluted golden tails atop two-segmented pillars (with only inner halves shown), and we should note the placement of the snake-biting blue *garuda*'s head within a stupa, which functions as a finial above. Yet the shawl-like garment worn over the shoulders by the principal deity and his attendant bodhisattvas is a feature that seems to necessitate a later dating to about the early fifteenth century. (Compare also Figure 7.8, which has a few shared distinctive stylistic features and lineage lamas that seem to date it to about the fifteenth century.)

Figure 7.8 is a vibrant icon that depicts Six-Armed Mahākāla with a lineage of gurus shown in diagram [E]. Stylistically some of its key elements, such as the minor figures sitting within roundels formed from long, intertwined lotus stems, resemble the preceding





FIG. 7.9  
Mahākāla Pañjaranātha with Sakya Lineage  
Late 14th or early 15th century  
19 ¾ x 16 ¼ in. (50.2 x 41.3 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.5.1 (HAR 82)  
Literature: R. Linrothe and J. Watt eds.  
2004, fig. 2.7.

[F]

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

painting (Fig. 7.7), though that is a classic Beri motif. Here the backrest arch is very different, resting on three-segmented pillars whose outer halves are not shown. It includes doubled golden circles of the voluted tails of *shangs shangs* bird-men, who here are distinctive for their holding of royal parasols aloft in honor of the central deity. The whole *garuda* is depicted, as are his enemies, the *naga* serpent deities (not just snake tails), whose snake tails coil away from the *garuda*.

The lineage it portrays continues until much later than the lineage in the other painting. According to Ngorchen's *Record of Teaching Received*, the teachings for Six-handed Mahākāla in Khyungpo Naljor's tradition has, after the great master Khyungpo Naljor, the same lineage as that of the Six Dharmas of Niguma (*Ni gu ma chos drug khrid*). In that lineage, Ngorchen is the eleventh Tibetan teacher.<sup>267</sup> The Fifth Dalai Lama in his *Record of Teachings Received* notes a similar lineage after Khyungpo Naljor.<sup>268</sup> Here the fourteenth guru is Khedrup Gelek Palsang (Khedrupje), who flourished in the first half of the fifteenth century.

If the painting portrays a single continuous lineage, then its patron would be the disciple of guru number 19, who would be the fourteenth Tibetan master shown. If one of the known lineages from Khyungpo Naljor (Khyung po rNal 'byor) is shown, the painting could date to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. But it is possible that two main lineages have been portrayed or several later branches, which would allow for an earlier dating. But no firm conclusions can be reached without inscriptions. Note that the pundit hats of all the lineal gurus, both Indian and Tibetan, have been painted red.

The painting is unusual for placing the wrathful central figure within flames and an ornate outer frame, which includes the stylized roundels representing



the tails of mythical animals. The edge of the flames behind the main figure is made of forty-two thin tongues of fire. The base of the inner frame includes, as a support for the pedestal below the main deities, a strip of stylized blocks of stone, with zones colored green, pink, gray, pink, and green. The multicolor lotus seat is atypical both for its ornateness and for projecting the final petals on both right and left ends above the plane defined by the tips of the other petals.

Figure 7.9 depicts Mahākāla Pañjaranātha with a Sakya Lineage. The painting features foliated scrollwork in the blue background of the inner square, behind the main deity. Note the golden highlights in the scrollwork and, at the bottom of the inner square, stylized rocks beneath the lotus seat of the main figure. The artist depicted these rocks in two main striations, light blue above and pale green below, with just enough variation and random overlapping of the thin, flat elements to achieve the desired slightly naturalistic effect. M. Rhie noted that the large flaming mandorla behind the main figures has soft tongues of flame, not the harsher, more strongly patterned type of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>269</sup> The dentate flame tips are shown only along the upper edge of the flame, not along the sides.

The painting depicts its twelve gurus mostly arranged in pairs, though Sachen's two sons both gaze in the same direction (to the left, toward their father). The color of the hats of some of the Indian pundits alternates yellow and red. The back cushions behind the gurus alternate blue and green, and are decorated with unusual scrollwork. (M. Rhie also provides a lineage that ends with Chögyal Phakpa, based on the Himalayan Art Resource website, item 82.)<sup>270</sup> A diagram of the lineage is shown as diagram [F].

I doubt, however, that the style justifies a dating to soon after Phakpa's time, i.e., to about 1300; two or three

generations later seems more likely to me. My hypothetical dating could be tested by gathering all known paintings of this deity with lineage and comparing them.

Figure 7.10 depicts Mahākāla Pañjaranātha again with a lineage. Here, however, it is more obvious that the short lineage of the Sakya School ends long before the time of its patron. The lineage has the simple structure shown in diagram [G]. The painting can be dated from its style to long after the last guru, number 6, Chögyal Phakpa, who died in 1280. The order of the three earliest Sakya founders is unusual, in that Drakpa Gyaltsen (guru number 3) is seated before his older brother (guru number 4). (I assume that both are portrayed with their usual iconography.)

The otherwise empty dark blue background is covered with regularly placed six-petalled red flowers, with some individual petals strewn between them. The edge of the flame behind the main figure is composed of a series of twenty-nine stylized dentate flame elements. Those sharply serrated flames may be stylistic markers for a dating to about the fifteenth century.

Figure 7.11 is a sumptuous work of religious art that portrays the Medicine Buddha with lineage and many minor deities. Its center is permeated with the calm, soothing presence of the Medicine Buddha and two accompanying bodhisattvas.<sup>271</sup> Fifty-two smaller attendant deities fill the vertical and horizontal rows around the borders and form three rows below. Most of them seem to be the forty-six or fifty attendant deities of a mandala of the Medicine Buddha,<sup>272</sup> which was later included as the third mandala in the Compendium of Tantras collection of Loter Wangpo.<sup>273</sup>

A different spiritual presence projects itself from the sky behind the central figure: groups of smaller, iconographically distinct figures arranged in two slanting rows, to both right and left,

descending down and away from central figure above, number 2, Mañjuśrī. These figures (numbers 3 through 11) are definitely venerable teachers who together form some kind of lineage. But their dress marks them as highly atypical among lineage lamas; they include many gurus who are dressed in the robes and peculiar turbans of the ancient Tibetan royalty. But precisely that should be expected if they are the early transmitters of the teachings of the Medicine Buddha in Tibet.

According to the record of teachings received of the Fifth Dalai Lama, his own lineage for the initiation of the Medicine Buddha as main figure (in a mandala of forty-seven deities in all, including the principal deity) began:<sup>274</sup>

1. The Lord of Sages (Buddha Śākyamuni, Thub pa'i dbang po)
2. Manjuśrī (mGon po 'Jam dbyangs)
3. The Omniscient Abbot, the Bodhisattva Kamalaśīla (mKhan chen Thams cad mkhyen pa Bo dhi sa tva)
4. The Dharma King Trisong Detsen (Chos rgyal Khri strong lde btsan)
5. Senalek Jingyön (Sad na legs mJing yon)
6. Ngadak Triral (mNga' bdag Khri ral)
7. Lhalung Palgyi Dorje (Lha lung dPal gyi rdo rje)
8. Ngadak Ösung (mNga' bdag 'Od srungs)
9. Ngadak Palkhortsen (mNga' bdag dPal 'khor btsan)
10. Tri Kyide Nyima Göṅ (Khri sKyī lde nyi ma mgon)
11. Ngadak Tashi De (mNga' bdag bKra shis lde)
12. Lha Lama Yeshe Ö (Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od)
13. Ngadak Lhade (mNga' bdag Lha lde)
14. Ngadak Öde (mNga' bdag 'Od lde)
15. Ngadak Tsede (mNga' bdag rTse lde)
16. Ngari Drajom (mNga' ris dGra bcom)





FIG. 7.10  
Mahākāla Pañjaranātha with Short Sakya  
Lineage  
15th century  
12 ½ x 9 ¾ in. (31.75 x 24.76 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1998.11.2 (HAR 642)  
Literature: R. Linrothe and J. Watt eds.  
2004, fig. 2.11.

[G]

1 2 3 4 5 6

Near the beginning of the lineage, guru number 3 stands out with his different dress as a monastic teacher who is here called “the omniscient Great Abbot, the Bodhisattva” (mKhan chen Thams cad mkhyen pa Bo dhi sa tva). That respectful epithet refers to the Indian master Kamalaśīla (Zhi ba ‘tsho), who came from India to Tibet by royal invitation and founded Samye Monastery in the 770s, establishing monastic ordination there. He also established among the Tibetan kings, and through them, eventually the Tibetan people, the worship of the Medicine Buddhas.

I listed just the beginning of this lineage, down to guru number 16. Among these gurus, all after number 4 are confirmed to be Tibetan kings or their descendants, except gurus number 7 (Lha lung dPal gyi rdo rje, assassin of wicked King Lang Darma in the 840s) and number 16, after whom the lineage is transmitted by Tibetan masters who were not royalty. After the collapse of their dynastic rule in central Tibet in the mid-ninth century, some royal descendants went west. The last seven or so royal descendants in this lineage hung on as rulers of districts in western Tibet.

Following that record of teachings received, I understand the true lineage to begin with Buddha Śākyamuni, who is seated to Mañjuśrī’s right. Mañjuśrī is guru number 2, and the following lineage descends in an alternating sequence as shown in diagram [H]. The lineage portrayed in the thangka seems to follow the list of gurus down to number 12, Lha Lama Yeshe Ö, a pious king who flourished in Guge in the tenth century. After that it may break off. Though I have not found any inscriptions on the thangka to help identify the nearly fifty minor deities, they should be possible to identify from the mandala rituals of this Medicine Buddha tradition.

Gurus 13 and 14 probably do not follow in the lineage given by the Fifth Dalai Lama. They were apparently





FIG. 7.11  
 Medicine Buddha  
 1410–1425  
 28 x 24 in. (71 x 61 cm)  
 Michael J. and Beata McCormick Collection  
 Literature: D. Jackson 2009, no. 3.50.

[H]

1  
 11 2 12  
 13 3 4 14  
 5 6  
 7 8  
 9 10



important Tibetan masters who lived much later, after a long gap in the lineage; I suspect that they flourished at the time the thangka was commissioned as eminent personal gurus of the patron. (The patron was a monk who had himself depicted in the bottom row, the second figure from the left.) Guru number 14, to the right, wears the black hat of a Karmapa, while number 13, to the left, is a prominent yellow-hatted master, possibly Tsongkhapa (1357–1419). Since the Karmapa is shown on the same level but to the left-hand of Tsongkhapa, a slightly inferior position to him, he may well be Tsongkhapa's younger contemporary the Fifth Karmapa Denshin Shekpa (1384–1415).

Tsongkhapa and the Fifth Karmapa were two of three most prominent lamas of their period who were formally invited to the Ming court by the Yongle emperor. Tsongkhapa declined to come because of his advanced age, but he sent as his representative a prominent senior disciple, Jamchen Chöje Shākya Yeshe (Byams chen Chos rje Shākya ye shes, 1354–1435), who founded Sera Monastery upon his return to Tibet. The painting thus seems to date from about 1410 to 1425, the final years of both masters' lives or soon thereafter, before the third abbot of Ganden and his followers provoked more serious and lasting sectarian rifts between the Geluk and other schools. (Originally the masters involved had important religious links; Tsongkhapa, after all, took novice ordination from the previous Karmapa, Rolpay Dorje.) Stylistically the painting would also seem to date from about that period, the first half of the fifteenth century.

#### THE BERI AT GYANTSE IN THE 1430S

The Pelkhor Chöde (dPal 'khor Chos sde) monastic center at Gyantse is an important site of Beri murals in central



FIG. 7.12  
The Great Gyantse Stupa  
Gyantse Palkhor Stupa  
Photograph by Hugh Richardson  
Literature: H. Richardson 1998, pl. 85.

Tsang. The main temple, or “Tsuklak Khang,” building of the complex was completed in 1425. The great multistory stupa nearby (Fig. 7.12) was begun soon thereafter, and it was constructed during the period 1427 to 1442. It was built under the patronage of the illustrious prince of Gyantse Rabten Kunzang Phak (1389–1442) and under the main religious oversight of Rinchen Paldrup (1403–1452), abbot of Nenyang Monastery.

Many artists contributed to this fifteen-year project, and among them the names of at least twenty-nine painting masters are transmitted by contemporaneous inscriptions in the individual chapels. These painters were all Tibetans from Tsang Province: twelve came from Lhatse to the northwest of Sakya, seven came from Nenyang near Gyantse, one small group came from Nyemo in northeastern Tsang, and the rest came from various other parts of Tsang, including one painter from Jonang.



FIG. 7.13  
Vairocana  
1427–1442  
Gyantse, Palkhor Stupa, Chapel 3Ea  
Photograph by Franco Ricca  
Literature: F. Ricca and E. Lo Bue 1993, p. 117, pl. 2.

Since Franco Ricca has devoted an essay to the “Stylistic Features of the Pelkhor Chöde at Gyantse,” we can read there his detailed description of many salient features, classified according to iconographic type.<sup>275</sup> Here we will only concern ourselves with peaceful deities.

Figure 7.13 depicts Vairocana as a peaceful deity with a classical elaborate Beri back support or backrest arch. Painted in chapel 3Ea of the great stupa by Tashi Zangpo (bKra shis bzang po), its style is the same as that of figure 230 in F. Ricca 1997, another Vairocana, but painted by Döndrup Zangpo (Don grub bzang po) from near Lhatse. Ricca in his article describes the second mural minutely as an example of a peaceful deity, noting strong similarities with Figure 7.13.

Figure 7.14 depicts the peaceful deity Lokeśvara with a new type of backrest arch that marked a departure from the old Beri types, here painted in chapel 3S of the stupa. F. Ricca





FIG. 7.14  
 Lokeśvara  
 1427–1442  
 Gyantse, Palkhor Stupa, Chapel 3S  
 Photograph by Franco Ricca  
 Literature: F. Ricca and E. Lo Bue 1993, p. 126, pl. 11.



FIG. 7.15  
 Avalokiteśvara  
 1427–1442  
 Gyantse, Palkhor Stupa, Chapel 3W  
 Photograph by Franco Ricca  
 Literature: F. Ricca and E. Lo Bue 1993, p.131, pl. 16.

described the increasingly radical transformation of these decorative elements of the Newar tradition's classic backrest, first in chapel 3W and then here in 3S:<sup>276</sup>

Finally, in the image of Vajrasattva ... in temple 3S, the shafts [of the old club-shaped] columns are barely recognizable in the flower stalks, which no longer uncoil from vases but originate in the large central lotus supporting the deity. Any trace of the old structure has disappeared, to be replaced by a marvelous vegetal creeper which surrounds the figure of the god like a garland.

Still, a certain continuity is maintained by the continuing presence of the classic body and head nimbuses, with ornate gold trim around their edges, filled in places with scrollwork and surrounded on the outside by multicolor radiating lights, also decorated with gold lines.

Figure 7.15 depicts the peaceful deity Avalokiteśvara as the main figure in chapel 3W of the stupa. It exemplifies the most radical treatment of the old Beri backrest arch: here that element has been done away with completely. The only throne back or decorative backrest arch provided for this deity, outside its body and head nimbuses and outer radiating multicolor lights, is a simple fringe of white stylized clouds. Such a treatment would also be possible in the next major style, the Menri, whose stylistic precursor this might be.<sup>277</sup>

Ricca classified the Gyantse stupa murals as constituting a “Gyantse School,” though he was aware that its painters came from all over Tsang and that thangkas with a similar style had been found in various monasteries of Tsang. It therefore seems better to classify them more generally as a Beri style of Tsang, noting that they stand near the end of the Universal Beri period, just before some strands of Tibetan painting, at

the hands of painters like Menthangpa, metamorphose into new, more landscape-oriented painting schools such as the Menri.

Ricca perceptively noted that the peaceful images at Gyantse—especially bodhisattvas and goddesses—begin to be shown clothed a little more modestly, with scarves (or shawls?) worn around the shoulders and hanging on the sides of both arms down to the elbows, a feature they share with Chinese bronzes produced during the reign of Yongle (reigned 1403–1424).<sup>278</sup> Such scarves or shawls would subsequently become standard in the Menri style.

Ricca noticed at Gyantse strikingly different ways of representing deities, depending on which wider iconographic class (peaceful, wrathful, etc.) a deity belonged to. Indeed, he counted these fundamentally different iconographic modes of representation as different styles:<sup>279</sup>

The paintings at Gyantse clearly reveal a close interconnection between style and iconography, distinctive styles being employed for diverse iconographic subjects. Just as there are very distinct literary styles appropriate to such forms of literature as the lyric, the epic and the tragic, so the styles used to represent peaceful deities must be distinguished from those used to represent wrathful deities.

It is indeed essential to distinguish those three main iconographic types or modes; otherwise, no stylistic comparison is possible. But such iconographically determined modes of representation are not the same thing as styles as art historians (whether Western or Tibetan) normally conceive them, i.e., as major stylistic movements such as the Beri or Menri. Each major painting style contains and utilizes the three modes of representation that Ricca here calls “styles.”



## EMERGENCE OF A FIRST TIBETAN STYLE AT GYANTSE?

Many scholars, Tibetan and Western, would now probably date the emergence of truly Tibetan styles to about the mid-fifteenth century, i.e., in the 1450s. This is slightly later than the pioneering opinion of Tucci, who in his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* maintained that before the period of the great stupas of Tsang (mainly the Gyantse stupa, which was painted for the most part in the 1430s), painting in Tibet had reflected a variety of foreign schools but that it had not yet become an expression of a distinctively Tibetan sensibility.<sup>280</sup> He believed that he had detected the earliest achievement of Tibetan artistic maturity precisely in some of the murals of these great multiple-chapel stupas of Tsang,<sup>281</sup> holding the best of such murals to be a uniquely Tibetan blending of the previous (mainly Indian, i.e., Nepalese and Chinese) stylistic currents. Although the Nepalese elements continued to predominate as before, he held that the influences had now been successfully assimilated and transformed by the Tibetan artistic sensibility.

Long after Tucci, F. Ricca similarly held Gyantse to be the product of “a fully mature Tibetan art.”<sup>282</sup> Noting Menthangpa’s connection with Nenying and its artists, he concluded that “Gyantse really was the birthplace of the independent, mature painting styles that flourished in fifteenth-century Tibet.” Though the early fifteenth century was doubtless a crucial juncture for Tibetan painting and the artists of Nenying probably strongly influenced the young Menthangpa, parts of Ricca’s judgment need modification. It would be more accurate to say that the style of the Gyantse murals of the 1430s “merely announces the birth” of a Tibetan national style, for the Chinese and Newar influences had not yet been fully assimilated.<sup>283</sup> Even Tucci maintained that “Nepalese elements continued to predominate at Gyantse as before,” and



hence, strictly speaking, the style remains basically the Beri.

The decisive step in the direction of a truly “Tibetan” style would be taken by artists of the next generation. Similarly, the authoritative indigenous Tibetan writers on art maintain that the earlier styles had not yet become a truly Tibetan style (*bod ris*) until the time of the outstanding Tibetan artistic geniuses Khyentse Chenmo (mKhyen brtse Chen mo) and Menla Döndrup (sMan bla don grub)—who flourished in the 1450s and 1460s.<sup>284</sup>

Figure 7.16 depicts a Buddha, said

FIG. 7.16  
Buddha in a Stupa  
1420–1450  
59 7/8 x 43 3/4 in. (152 x 111 cm)  
Michael Henss Collection, Zurich  
Literature: P. Pal et al. 2003, no. 154.

to be Vairocana, with two accompanying bodhisattvas in a stupa. It is a remarkable example of the Gyantse mural style in a thangka, and its painter displays a sovereign command of a wide range of pictorial ornamentations. Except for the blue-beaked and blue-winged *garuda* devouring the snake above, the elaborate



backrest is devoid of mythical animals: the largest golden scrollwork designs to the right and left of the Buddha's head now seem to exist in their own right, as tails growing from a jewel, if anything. The two pillars supporting the backrest arch curve elegantly to follow the shape of the nearby stupa. The two bottom segments of the pillar do not issue forth from a vase but grow up from between the petals of the lotus that is the seat of the main deity. The second floral segment ends on both sides with a broad, flat light blue capital, presumably the head of a dried lotus flower, and this is what supports the magical flaming blue jewel on each side, from which emit the elaborate coils of golden volutes.

The prominent flowers between the deities are very reminiscent of the murals of the Path with the Fruit Chapel (Lam 'bras Lha khang) upstairs in the nearby main building at the Palkhor Chöde. But they are improved by adding, to the right and left of the stupa, clusters of tree leaves, each cluster containing a red flower.

The roundels of scrollwork in the blue background have been built up from repeated flower motifs within each loop, continuing the floral theme very subtly. A small and rudimentary blue and green landscape is hidden at the base of the painting, in both corners and behind the legs of the large central throne base.

In the sky above, several cloud types float, some thinly striated and others puffy or with long meandering tails. A few edges of puffy white or blue clouds exceed the formal limits of the composition (the upper gold line), increasing the illusion of depth. Similar transgressions of the outer boundary are intentionally but more subtly employed below with a few tips of deity's scarves or the ornate legs of the great throne supporting the main figure.

The lay patron has been shown in the bottom right corner, though not on the same side as his table of offerings.

A prominent, rich noble of Tsang, he sits with wife and children, including a small daughter who stands beneath her mother, trespassing slightly beyond the gold-strip defined edge of the painting. The main patron wears the green long-sleeved robe of a layman, and he sits on a low wooden throne. He and his three sons all wear red pointed caps, and two of those boys wear maroon robes, possibly a sign that they had been dedicated to a monastic life.

The painter was an outstanding artist of the day, who possessed both technical mastery and the willingness to test the limits of artistic possibility. He may have belonged to the group of artists from Nenying, some of whom tutored the young genius Menthangpa Menla Döndrup in exactly this period.

Figure 7.17 is a monumental painting that depicts the protective deity Mahākāla Pañjaranātha with his Sakya lineage. The stolid, rotund black-colored protector commands the center of the painting effortlessly from within a ring of fire. The lineal gurus around him have each been rendered with obvious care and even a certain realistic variation.

The painting was presented as Figure 2.17 as an example of a rare lineal arrangement. Its lineage begins with Vajradhara at the top middle, progresses three figures to the viewer's left, then drops down the left column. The full structure is shown in diagram [I]. The lineage of Mahākāla depicted here is only eighteen gurus long.<sup>285</sup> The guru of that generation would have taught two generations before Ngorchén (according to Ngorchén's record of teachings received). Since the painting depicts no patron, I suspect that the final guru (number 18), who is shown in the midst of propitiating the protector, played an active role in other ways, too, in bringing about the creation of this painting.

Some of the stylistic features of the painting are reminiscent of Gyantse in about the 1420s (note the stylized

clouds, in particular). Yet some other features, such as the green landscapes, as M. Rhie noted, seem, in general, to belong to the sixteenth century. Hence her dating of the painting to the first half of that century.<sup>286</sup> In my opinion, the thangka was painted in about the time that Ngorchén flourished at Ngör (1430s–1450s) or maybe just before. Its style seems to represent an immediate precursor to the work of one of the stylistic revolutionaries of the mid-fifteenth century. I imagine that Khyentse and Menthangpa might have painted works like this, at least early in their careers. (To say anything more certain, we need to identify the last few masters who are portrayed.)

Figure 7.18 depicts the bodhisattva Maitreya with an Indian and Tibetan Mahayana lineage or lineages stemming from him. Among the twenty-eight teachers pictured to the right and left, the fourteen nearest the top wear pointed yellow hats. These are not Tibetan lamas but, rather, learned Indian masters (pundits). They do not wear upper monk vests like the fourteen Tibetan masters below them.

Note that here the draping shawls or scarves cover more of Maitreya's shoulders and upper torso than was the case in the Gyantse murals. Compared with Figure 7.16, the painter here has employed decorative elements with restraint. Most of the entire blue background is flat. Yet it is filled with thin gold striations of high clouds, and faint golden nimbus clouds pop up at regular intervals before them. The sole striking vegetal feature of the painting is the stem of the lotus that shoots up from the middle of a dyke-enclosed pond below. The only place where I could note traditional Newar scrollwork was the white lunar disk, upon which his pedestal rests. Brocade designs (*gos chen ri mo*) are everywhere. Realistic brown panels of wood add an unusual touch to the pedestal.





FIG. 7.17  
Mahākāla Pañjaranātha with Lineage  
Mid-15th century  
63 ½ x 53 ½ in. (161.6 x 136 cm)  
Zimmerman Family Collection  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991,  
p. 222, no. 71.

The bejeweled golden edges of the body and head nimbuses and the multi-color rays in the outer part of the nimbus are not rendered in a typical Tibeto-Newar style. But those were, I believe, effects that painters of the mid-fifteenth century generation just before or during the life of Menthangpa could employ. (Compare the similar treatment in the Gyantse mural of Samantabhadra.)<sup>287</sup> This and the previous painting, together with the Gyantse murals, exemplify the rich stylistic possibilities available to this transitional Beri style near the end of its Middle period, shortly before the landscape revolution.

BERI IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY  
MURALS OF MUSTANG

In addition to the much earlier cave murals at Luri, many temple murals in the later Middle or Universal Beri styles survive elsewhere in Mustang District of Nepal. For example, the two main monastic structures built in the walled city of Mustang in the fifteenth century both testify to the presence of Beri styles at that time. Of these, the first, the Great Maitreya (Byams chen) Temple, dates to the last few decades of the Middle period. It was followed about three decades later by the second major temple in the walled city of Mustang, the Great Buddha (*Thub chen*) Temple.

*The Great Maitreya Temple*

The three-storied Great Maitreya Temple of Mustang can be confidently dated to the time of Ngorchén and attributed to the patronage of his great supporter, the Lo king Amgön Zangpo (A mgon bzang po, b. 1420). That king began building it in 1437, immediately after Ngorchén's second visit and completed it ten years later, in 1447, during Ngorchén's final visit. Its main image was an imposing (approximately forty-nine-foot [fifteen-

[1]									
	4	3	2	1		10	11	12	13
	5								14
	6								15
	7								16
	8								17
	9								18





FIG. 7.18  
 The Bodhisattva Maitreya with a Lineage  
 1420–1450  
 20 ½ x 19 ¾ in. (52 x 50.1 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 F1998.17.2 (HAR 664)  
 Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
 no. 32.





FIG. 7.19  
Great Maitreya  
Great Maitreya Temple, Lo Mustang, Nepal  
1437–1447, main images extensively  
restored in 1663  
Photograph by Thomas Laird  
Literature: P. Lieberman et al. 2003, enter-  
ing Jampa 5; cf. G. Tucci 1977, opposite  
p. 49.

meter] -tall) statue of the future Buddha, Maitreya (see Fig. 7.19).

Master artists (*dpon mo*) from Lo, Dolpo, and Gungthang painted most of its murals, and not painters from the Kathmandu Valley. (The words *dPon* or *dPon mo* in the mural inscriptions here signifies master artist, as in western Tibetan dialects, and they should not be misconstrued to mean nobles.)<sup>288</sup> The temple and its contents were consecrated by Ngorchén in 1447, during his third visit.<sup>289</sup>

Some previous publications attributed both the Great Maitreya and Great Buddha Temples to the patronage of the Lo kings Amapal and Amgön Zangpo, dating the Jampa Lhakhang to between 1424 and 1435.<sup>290</sup> The Great Maitreya was actually built a decade later, under the patronage of Amgön Zangpo alone. That king's role as chief patron is con-

firmed by the Lo royal genealogy, the *Tsarang Molla* (a speech read before the assembly of Tsarang Monastery), and the history of Lo Mustang by the late Khenpo Tashi Tendzin (mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin). The Great Buddha Temple dates a generation later and was built under the patronage of King Amgön Zangpo's eldest son, Tashi Göñ.

The Lo royal genealogy briefly describes the murals in the Great Maitreya Temple, mentioning the temple as one of the greatest acts of patronage of King Amgön Zangpo, son of Amapal and chief host during Ngorchén's last two journeys to Lo.<sup>291</sup> He was also a munificent patron of Jamyang Sherab Gyatso, a master from Ngari Province who served as first abbot of the great religious community that Amgön Zangpo had founded.

The temple's structure is unusual.<sup>292</sup> It does not include a large assembly hall, so large public gatherings may have taken place outside, in the adjoining enclosed courtyard. (For a view of the courtyard to the south, see Figure 7.20.) R. Vitali briefly describes the layout of the temple:<sup>293</sup>

Inside the walled town of Lo Manthang stands a three-storey temple [of Maitreya], which is a symbol of the town. ... Its structure is perfectly balanced on the outside and seems to belong to a single building phase or a single architectural conception, and yet its interior denies this possibility. A huge throne on which sits the image of Jampa [or Maitreya], the Future Buddha, the main statue of the complex, is so disproportionate as to dominate the whole of the ground floor. The statue of Jampa, however, occupies only the middle floor when it would normally occupy at least two floors of the structure. The third floor, which, in this kind of temple is usually



FIG. 7.20  
The Great Maitreya Temple as seen from its courtyard, looking northward  
Lo Mustang  
1437–1447  
Photograph by Klaus-Dieter Mathes, 1995

reserved for the head of the colossal image of Jampa, is bare except for the surrounding murals. This decoration is appropriate for the type of "Paradise Rooms" on the top floor of many temples, but not for those dedicated to Jampa.<sup>294</sup>

An unpublished history of the Lo rulers clarifies the original iconographic scheme of the temple, saying that the three-story temple was divided into different areas and chapels, each with murals devoted to different classes of deities from the sutra and tantra scriptures, following a doctrinal hierarchy. First, on the ground floor, the main assembly hall had murals depicting deities from the sutras. Second, in the circumambulation chapel, murals portrayed deities of the Kriyā and Caryā tantras. Third, on the second (middle) floor, was a temple from which one could see the face of Maitreya (*Zhal ras lha khang*),



which had murals depicting all mandalas of the Yoga tantras. Fourth, on the third (i.e., top) floor, was a temple in which Anuttaratantra deities were depicted, and a Vajradhara chapel portraying deities from the Anuttarayoga tantras.<sup>295</sup> The top floor was thus essential from the beginning for the conception of the entire structure; it was, indeed, the temple's doctrinal pinnacle. I therefore do not follow R. Vitali's hypothesis that the top floor was a later addition dating to the 1490s or that the entire structure was "oddly conceived."<sup>296</sup>

More details about the plan and contents of the two main temples of Mustang are provided by Vitali's article of 1999.<sup>297</sup> He discerned (p. 21) two styles in the mandalas in the middle floor (*bar khang*), one the Newar painting of the great Vajradhatu mandala and the second, that of all the other mandalas. He found the presence of Newar artistry indicated by an inscription, which names the painter "The Newar Deva Lhaga" (*bal po dhe ba lha dga'*).<sup>298</sup> The Tibetan name Lhaga would be Devapriya in Sanskrit, and that may indicate the full name of the Newar painter.

Figures 7.21b, 7.22, 7.23, and 7.24 depict details of mandalas of the Yogatantras and associated deities on the middle story, or second floor, of the Great Maitreya Temple. This chapel contains murals depicting forty main and fourteen smaller mandalas. The larger mandalas (approximately 1.25 meters or 49 inches across) are arranged in two rows, one upper and one lower, of twenty mandalas each. Between them, the fourteen smaller mandalas form an intermediary row. Figures of bodhisattvas, lineal lamas, and floral decorative motifs fill the space above and between the fifty-four mandalas.<sup>299</sup> (See Figs. 7.23 and 7.24 for details of deities between mandalas and flowers in rondels.)<sup>300</sup>

The principal mandala of the Yogatantra mandalas was the Vajradhātu Mandala, which depicts one thousand Vajrasattvas.<sup>301</sup> It is depicted here as Figure 7.21a, the lower of two mandalas on the south end of the west wall. Figure 7.21b depicts a mural detail from the corner to the right and below that mandala. The deities, dark green Amoghasiddhi and white Vajrasattva, are depicted within roundels of stylized coiling stems of lotus flowers. The dark blue background of the deities is filled with decorative floral motifs of various colors and sizes, each one an attempt to portray a lotus or similar aquatic flower. The circles of the smallest stylized lotuses harmonize with both the floral theme and the shape of the larger roundels.

Style consists of decorative detail, which in the Beri often prominently includes minute foliate scrollwork, which can be seen only from very close or in a magnified detail. For stylistic studies, this implies that for any meaningful comparison, each painting should be illustrated not only in its entirety but also with one or two telling details in which many such small elements can be seen (see Fig. 7.24). Figure 7.21c also shows the face and head nimbus of Vajrasattva (a detail from Fig. 7.21b). We can see in Figure 7.24 several variations of the main Newar scrollwork that fill every corner of its mandalas. Executed in indigo or lac dye over the corresponding base colors, this single detail reveals at least four main scrollwork types that have been drawn to fill correspondingly thicker or thinner strips of the flat background. (The darker the background, the harder it is to make out details.) Several different decorative strips of stylized lotus leaves can also be found on background strips of varying thickness and brightness.

### *The Great Buddha Temple*

The second great fifteenth-century temple of the city of Mustang, the Great Buddha, or Great Sage, (Thub chen) Temple, differed in its structure from the Great Maitreya Temple, consisting of a large enclosed main hall supported by more than forty pillars.<sup>302</sup> It was built a generation later, under the main patronage of the next king of Lo, the illustrious Tashi Göñ (bKra shis mgon, d. 1489), eldest son of Amgön Zangpo, who began its construction in 1467 and completed it five years later, in 1472. To perform the consecration, he invited the outstanding scholar of the Sakya School Shākya Chokden (Shākya mchog ldan 1428–1507) from central Tsang, who traveled to Mustang with a large entourage of disciples and attendants.<sup>303</sup> A number of inscriptions and a brief history of this temple survive.<sup>304</sup>

The architectural conception of the Great Buddha Temple was thus completely different from the Jampa Lhakhang. Here the building does not extend mainly upward but horizontally.<sup>305</sup> As R. Vitali briefly explained:<sup>306</sup>

It is rather a spacious single room with a forest of columns subdividing its interior on a regular grid. A huge platform against its west wall is where the statues of the temple gods are placed. Painted paradises from the late fifteenth century are on the walls. The use of pillars has a great significance in Tibetan architecture. Tibetans conceive and understand the dimension of inner space in terms of the number of pillars placed inside a monument. Thubchen had forty-two pillars and is thus a big temple.<sup>307</sup>

The murals of the Great Buddha Temple belong, strictly speaking, to the first decade of the Later Beri period, according to my chronology. The style remains





FIG. 7.21A  
Vajradhātu Mandala  
Great Maitreya Temple, middle story, south  
end of the west wall  
1437–1447  
Photograph by Thomas Laird  
Literature: K. Dowman 1997, fig. 221;  
P. Lieberman et al. 2003, JG\_16wsi.



FIG. 7.21B  
Amoghasiddhi and Vajrasattva in roundels,  
with floral motifs, below to the right of the  
Vajradhātu Mandala  
Photograph by Thomas Laird  
Literature: K. Dowman 1997, fig. 223.



FIG. 7.21C  
Vajrasattva (detail from Fig. 7.21b)  
Photograph by Thomas Laird





FIG. 7.22  
Vajrasattva/Vajrapāṇi Mandala with  
Aṣṭamahānāga Retinue  
Yogatantra Mandala Chapel, Great  
Maitreya Temple, south section of east wall  
(ES 1)  
1437–1447  
Photograph by Thomas Laird  
Literature: K. Dowman 1997, fig. 227; cf.  
P. Lieberman et al. 2003, JG\_ES\_1a\_cc.



FIG. 7.24  
Flowers in roundels, decorative details  
Yogatantra Mandala Chapel, Great  
Maitreya Temple, south section of east wall  
1437–1447  
Photograph by Philip Lieberman, 1994  
Literature: P. Lieberman et al. 2003, no.  
JG\_ES\_nacc

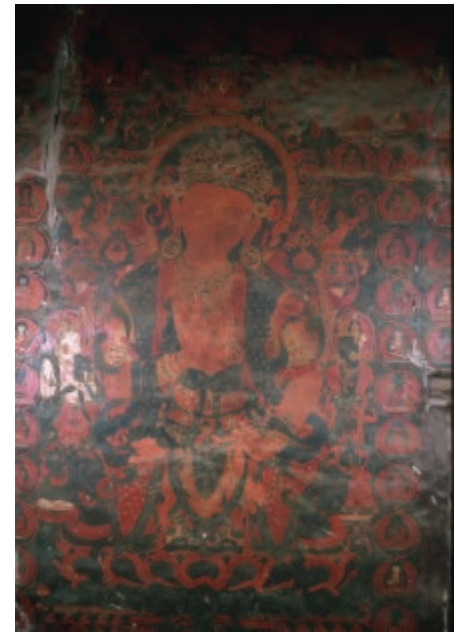


FIG. 7.25  
Bodhisattva as main figure with attendants  
Great Buddha (Thubchen) Temple, east wall  
1467–1472  
Photograph by Philip Lieberman, 1994  
Literature: P. Lieberman et al. 2003, no.  
T\_E\_3.



FIG. 7.23  
Deity between mandalas  
Yogatantra Mandala Chapel, Great  
Maitreya Temple, south wall  
1437–1447  
Photograph by Philip Lieberman, 1994  
Literature: P. Lieberman et al. 2003, no.  
JG\_SF2\_F3

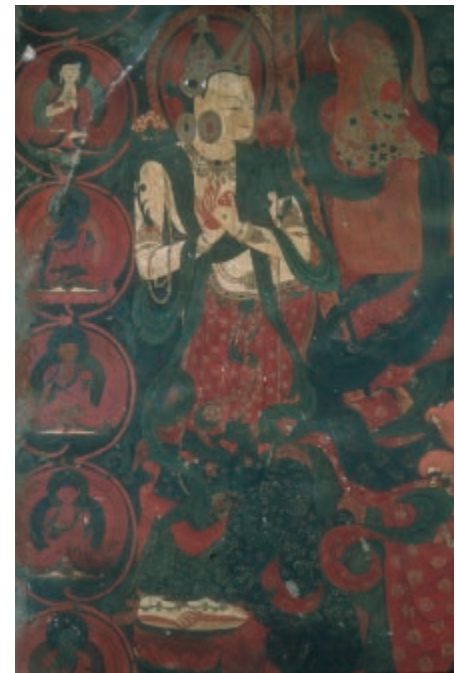


FIG. 7.25A (detail from Fig. 7.25)  
Bodhisattva attendant  
Great Buddha Temple, east wall  
1467–1472  
Photograph by Philip Lieberman, 1994  
Literature: P. Lieberman et al. 2003,  
no. T\_E\_3La.





FIG. 7.26  
Bodhisattva attendant of a medicine buddha  
Great Buddha Temple, south wall  
1467–1472  
Photograph by Philip Lieberman, 1994  
Literature: P. Lieberman et al. 2003, no. S2b.

an ornate, highly developed Beri. The east (entrance door) mural of the Thubchen Temple portrays six bodhisattvas as its main subject. The south wall contains depictions of the eight Medicine Buddhas. The main figures on both walls are surrounded by pairs of attendant bodhisattvas (depicted at a much smaller scale) and other accompanying figures in vine roundels.

Figure 7.25 depicts as its main figure a bodhisattva with attendants and accompanying deities on the east wall. Figure 7.25a presents a detail of a bodhisattva attendant of that same main figure.<sup>308</sup>

Other telling details from the south wall are found in Figures 7.26 and 7.27, bodhisattva attendants who stand to the right and left of a medicine buddha. Here the head nimbuses of the attendant bodhisattvas have been filled with prominent roundels decorated with



FIG. 7.27  
Bodhisattva attendant of a medicine buddha  
Great Buddha Temple, south wall  
1467–1472  
Photograph by Helmut Neumann  
Literature: H. Neumann 1997, fig. 3.

scrollwork, unlike the similar figures on the east wall.

As an example of Beri paintings of this period, the temple is important, and no less a connoisseur than G. Tucci considered its murals “excellently done and of a good period” and counted it, together with the Great Maitreya Temple, as one of “two notable monuments of the best period of Mustang.”<sup>309</sup>

#### SAKYA PATRONAGE IN WESTERN TIBET

A number of other striking examples of paintings of the Sakya School, including some in the Rubin Museum, have been linked with other places farther west than Mustang in western Tibet, Ngari Province. They have been assumed to come from Guge District, where some murals survive, such as at Tsaparang. Ngorchon, for instance, had many disciples from Guge and thereabouts in cen-

tral Ngari, and Sakya monks from that locale lived in their own Shide (bZhi sde) dormitories in the central-Tibetan monasteries of their school, named after their Shide Monastery in Guge.

G. Tucci was the first to classify a Guge School as separate from what he called the Nepalese Schools.<sup>310</sup> Already in his study of the Tsarang murals (published in Italian in 1935), Tucci stressed the importance of the Tsaparang murals, asserting that they prove the existence of a painting school in Guge independent of the schools prevailing in other parts of Tibet, a school that also manifested in its thangkas, which he intended to study in a future book.<sup>311</sup> In that following book, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Tucci followed the same line, grouping a “Guge School” separately from the “Nepalese Schools.”<sup>312</sup>

Tucci’s approach was later followed in many respects by J. Huntington.<sup>313</sup> Huntington, however, devoted more effort to the subject, and described the style as an amalgam of retardataire Kashmiri tendencies and Nepali and Chinese features.<sup>314</sup> He more recently repeated the assertion that traditions of Kashmiri art lived on in Guge.<sup>315</sup>

P. Pal, too, was a careful student of Tucci, but when it came to the origins of



the Guge style, he departed from the old master in substance if not in terminology, stressing in his book of 1984 that “the primary inspiration of the Guge style appears to have been the Sakyapa [i.e., Beri painting] tradition.”<sup>316</sup> Pal added that the Beri (his Sakyapa) style seems to have been the “dominant influence” in western-Tibetan painting in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>317</sup> He also expressed his doubts that one can detect any Kashmiri survival in the Guge paintings of the fifteenth century.<sup>318</sup>

Figure 7.28 depicts as its main figure the great Indian yogi and adept Virupa, originator of the Path with the Fruit instructions. Two early founders of Sakya, who prominently spread those teachings in Tibet, are shown as minor figures above. Virupa has been portrayed with an almost sweet Newar-like face, and he wears simple golden jewelry and hair ornaments. His red-and-blue-beaded rosary hangs low, resting in one place on the sole of his left foot.

The two gurus above are Sakya Pandita to the left and presumably his uncle Drakpa Gyaltsen to the right. Normally, their places should have been reversed, with the older lama sitting on the left. (But the present arrangement might work for the painting if it were the third in a series, hanging to the right of a central Vajradhara.) I see no evidence for identifying the lay master on the right as Sönam Tsemo.<sup>319</sup>

This painting has been previously dated to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century and said to be from western Tibet (Guge).<sup>320</sup> It may be a previously overlooked work in the Beri style from western Tibet. The background is deep blue, decorated with flowers made up of red dots (each dot representing a petal). The same dotted flower motif is used on the red painted strips to the right and left of the main painted area, imitating a textile.

Small trees with realistically mottled trunks form the sides and fringe of



the cave-like backrest behind Virupa. Many of the trees have a single bird perching upon them. Above Virupa's head, the topmost tree in the top center of the painting is covered with a sort of multicolor parasol, which symbolizes or stands in for a real parasol of honor. (The trees immediately to his right and left also have simpler parasol-like tops.)

The background of all three nimbus-like backrests are red and decorated with whorls of decorative scrollwork. The lac-dye scrollwork in the red field behind Virupa seems to be basically vegetal, and to the left larger roundels have been built up with eight or ten smaller ones. The lac-dye whirling spirals that fill the flames behind the protective god-

FIG. 7.28  
Virupa  
Ca. late 14th or 15th century  
12 3/4 x 10 in. (32.3 x 25.4 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1998.11.1 (HAR 641)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 83.

dess Palden Lhamo are different and may be a simple early fire pattern (*meris*).

The deep blue background color represents not only the sky above but also water below. In front of Virupa is a pond of blooming lotuses: two fully bloomed ones float to the right and left, while a larger central lotus opens its



multicolor petals beneath his feet, symbolizing a lotus seat. The stylized lotus stem beneath it is almost as prominent as the central lotus flower.

The flame fringes of the wrathful figures to the right and left are not as smooth as in Pāla art, nor are they yet shown with the more obviously serrated edges typical of Universal and Later Beri paintings. Many features of the painting would be unusual in a painting from central Tibet, and hence M. Rhie may be correct when she attributed it to western Tibet (Guge?) and dated it to the late fourteenth or first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>321</sup>

Figure 7.29 portrays Vajradhara and Vajradharma, each with his own complete lineage of teachings, from the Hevajra and Cakrasamvara cycles, respectively. These are the respective primordial gurus for the Hevajra and Cakrasamvara tantric cycles. The two lineages can be charted as shown in diagram [J], marking the gurus of the second lineage with asterisks. The middle figure in the top row seems to be the blue goddess Vajranairātmā. I have counted her as second in both lineages, though if she is skipped in the second lineage, the number of gurus in the second lineage becomes one less. Both lineages presumably end with the great master with a red hat (number 18/\*31) above the two main figures, who may be Ngorchen and who can be assumed to be the guru of the patron pictured below. The patron is an ordained lama, but he is pictured with attendants and female minor patrons standing to his right, presumably his noble relatives.

In the first lineage, Sachen is number 3, here shown receiving teachings directly from Virupa. This direct transmission is typical also for the *Profound Path (lam zab)* instructions and guru yoga practices.<sup>322</sup> The sixth in the lineage is clearly Sakya Pandita. A small teacher also appears below the tutelary deity Hevajra, who is either number 9 or

possibly a guru of number 18. Ngorchen would be generation 14, so the last guru, if this is the simplest rendition of the Ngorpa tradition, could be approximately four gurus after him. This would date the painting to about 1500, later than expected.

However, some very exquisite commissions could show even more complete versions of the lineages, including other branch lineages of outstanding practitioners and teachers. This was done in an elegant painting of lineage gurus from the same Ngorpa tradition and about the same period, in which Ngorchen is shown as eleventh after Sakya Pandita. See Figure 8.11, in which the other main branch shown is the transmission from Sakya Pandita through Tshokgom (Tshogs bsgom) and from him to Nyenchenpa (Nyan chen pa), in addition to the main lineage through Sakya Pandita’s nephew Chögyal Phakpa. I believe that something similar has been depicted here.<sup>323</sup>

In the second lineage, Sachen is guru number \*20 and Sakya Pandita is number \*23. This agrees with the Sakya lineage for the elaborate Cakrasamvara initiation following Luipa’s tradition, as does the appearance of Saraha and Nāgārjuna as first and second great adepts. This also results in the prominent

red-hatted lama behind the main figures becoming more obviously Ngorchen, who was thirty-first in this lineage according to his own record of teachings.<sup>324</sup> See also the second of three charts of Cakrasamvara lineages laid out by C. Luczanits, which presents another Luipa tradition of Cakrasamvara transmitted by the Sakya School.<sup>325</sup>

All things considered, that prominent red-hatted lama pictured in the middle above could well be Ngorchen, as some have already suggested, and the painting seems likely to have been commissioned about the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>326</sup>

The painting (like Fig. 7.30 and a number of others) is also considered to be from western Tibet or Guge. (Ngorchen never visited Guge, but he had royal disciples from there, most notably Namkhay Wangpo Sönam De, b. 1409; moreover, he visited Purang once, in 1436, and Mustang three times.)<sup>327</sup> Two elements that reveal this provenance are the rampant lions and realistically lumbering elephants in the pedestal of the main throne. An almost identical elephant is found in a mural depicting the goddess Prajñāpāramitā in the White Temple at Tholing.<sup>328</sup> Note also the two-segmented pillars with animals that wrap themselves around them. Golden clouds

[J]

7	6	5	4	3	2	*3	*4	*5	*6	*7
8										*8
10	9									*9
11						18 (*31)				*10
12										*11
13										*12
14										*13
15				1A					1B	*14
16										*15
17										*16
d										*17
d	d	d	d		*24	*23	*22	*21	*20	*19 *18
d	d	Patron	d		*30	*29	*28	*27	*26	*25





FIG. 7.29  
 Vajradhara and Vajradharma with Hevajra  
 and Cakrasamvara Lineages  
 Western Tibet; mid-15th century  
 35 x 29  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (89 x 74.5 cm)  
 Michael J. and Beata McCormick Collection  
 Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1996,  
 p. 440, no. 192 (16a).



appear in the background sky above the main backrest arch. We should also note, for instance, the fancy smaller backrest arches and decorative scrollwork lavished on the row of gurus above, with an amazing amount of variety and every second one crested with a *garuda* head or a *kīrtimukha* auspicious demon-face mask. Otherwise, the style obviously descends, in general, from the Beri.

Figure 7.30 depicts the compassionately smiling Sachen as main figure, with two sons to his right and left, shown as three main transmitters of the Path with the Fruit teachings. Based on an established tradition going back to early portraits, this painting of Sachen portrays him as a venerable lay master who was the very embodiment of kindness (one of his sobriquets was He of Great Kindness, *brtse ba chen po*). Among his four sons, the two spiritually most outstanding ones accompany him to his right and left. Like Sachen, they were Buddhist lay adherents, though they did not marry or continue the family line. They dressed like laymen, wearing long sleeves and colors like white and green, which were not allowed for monks. This painting embodies the iconographical consequences of those dress rules: Sachen wears a white outer robe, and his two sons wear garments with long white sleeves and green trim.

The painting abounds with other interesting iconographical details. An elaborate lotus in the foreground grows from a pond below and culminates in the elaborate lotus seat of the central figure. Its looping tendrils on both sides support the seats of Sachen's sons. They sit on pedestals that rest on a lower lotus seat, whose petals are highly unusual in their design and colors. The Indian pundit Gayadhara (number 7) wears a pointed red hat, while the red hat of Sakya Pandita (number 14), an early Tibetan all-around scholar, is rounded at the top.

The structure of the painting is shown in diagram [K]. The last guru

portrayed belongs to generation number 25, four guru generations later than Ngorchén in the Ngorpa lineage. This would date the painting to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (about 1500), assuming that this is the main Ngorpa lineage, which I have no reason to doubt.

This painting, like the preceding one, apparently originated in western Tibet. Note the unusually thick pillars that support the elaborate backrest arch, each broad enough to accommodate one of the two main disciples of Sachen. That stylistic peculiarity has been documented in murals in Tholing, Guge.<sup>329</sup> The White Temple of Tholing is also known for lively portrayals of throne-supporting animals and flowers within lotus-stalk roundels, very much like the rampant lions that gyrate here on small lotuses immediately below Sachen.<sup>330</sup>

For a wider comparison of western Tibetan thangkas of this period, we should compare the painting of Śākyamuni and the Buddhas of Confession, which is from the same region and datable to about 1475 to 1500. It has been aptly described by Pal and is not published here.<sup>331</sup> The *garuda* at the top of its backrest arch is unusual in that it has a large golden wheel above its head, like that found in this portrait of Sachen, where it projects prominently beyond the upper border. Note also the three-segmented pillar of the main backrest arch, with animals, even elephants, wrapping themselves around them on each level, which are reminiscent of the main pillars in Figures 7.29.

#### LATER BERI IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

As one reaches the mid- and late sixteenth century, the traits of the old Beri became increasingly anachronistic, at least from the point of view of the newer artistic traditions in central Tibet. The lamas of Ngor Monastery in Tsang were

one prominent group who staunchly maintained certain key elements of the old tradition much longer, even until the late sixteenth century. They were not alone.

Lo Mustang was considered one of the eastern-most districts of Ngari Province in western Tibet. To its west, the central districts of western Tibet (including Guge and Purang) were also home to Beri paintings for several centuries, including some paintings from the Sakya School. Ngorchén visited Purang and had a number of outstanding disciples from Guge and other parts of western Tibet.

Guge remained a place where with royal support at least some painters preserved elements of the Beri style well into the sixteenth century. One recent scholar classified Guge painting from the tenth through fourteenth century (or even as late as the sixteenth century) as a continuation of Kashmiri traditions, whose latest flowering is said to be known and admired in the early murals of Alchi, in Ladakh.<sup>332</sup> The Pāla styles actually first penetrated western Tibet by the twelfth century (presumably at the time of Drigung religious expansion). They completely eclipsed the Kashmiri styles in western Tibet by the mid-thirteenth century, as witnessed in the later temples of Alchi and elsewhere in Ladakh at Wanla.<sup>333</sup> Nor had the stylistic changes completely ended, for many fifteenth- and sixteenth-century murals of Tsaparang (Guge) can be seen to descend neither from Kashmiri nor Pāla models but rather mainly from Newar ones. In the late fifteenth century, for example, the patrons of the Red Temple of Tsaparang and White Temple of Tholing, in particular, had murals painted in a predominantly Beri style.<sup>334</sup>

Many instances of Beri paintings from western Tibet owed their existence to the Geluk School, which predominated in Guge after the successful missionary efforts of Tsongkhapa's disciple





FIG. 7.30  
 Sachen and His Sons  
 Western Tibet; ca. 1500  
 36 ½ x 22 in. (92.7 x 55.9 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2007.20.1 (HAR 65789)

[K]						
5	3	1		2	4	6
7						8
9						10
14						15
16						17
18						19
20						21
22						23
24						25
(Patron, 26?)						







FIG. 7.31

The Early Visionary Life of Sönam Gyatsho,  
the Third Dalai Lama  
1550–1575

48 ½ x 36 ¾ in. (123.2 x 93.3 cm)

Private Collection

Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor

Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991,  
no. 97; and G. Tucci 1949, pp. 392–399.

Guge Ngawang Drakpa in the early to mid-fifteenth century. One instance may be the red-hatted Tsongkhapa discussed below (Fig. 7.34), if it proves to be from western Tibet as some assert. Figure 7.31, a well-known portrait of the Third Dalai Lama, Sönam Gyatsho (bSod nams rgya mtsho 1543–1589), with early episodes from his visionary life, is another example.<sup>335</sup>

The painting was based on an original painted in the mid-sixteenth century in central Tibet by the great painter Trengkhawa (Phreng kha ba), also known as Rikharwa (Ri mkhar ba, flourished from about the 1500s to the 1570s). The young Sönam Gyatsho instructed that painter in about 1555 on how to portray these early episodes from the Dalai Lama's esoteric biography.<sup>336</sup> When the original model for this painting was commissioned, the main royal patrons of Guge were King Jikten Wangchuk Pekar De ('Jig rten dbang phyug pad dkar lde) and his two brothers, who reigned from about the 1530s to the 1550s and were devoted patrons of Tashilhunpo Monastery and the Third Dalai Lama. In Guge they commissioned the White Temple and Vajrabhairava Temple at Tsaparang, which represent a last artistic efflorescence there.<sup>337</sup> In 1534 they sent via the lama Shantipa (1487–1567) a huge offering to Sönam Gyatsho, inviting him to their kingdom. That same year he directed the first painted portrayal of his spiritual life on a thangka and sent it to Guge. In 1555 they sent another great offering, requesting Sönam Gyatsho to come, adding that he should send a painting of his life as



his personal representative in advance. (The present painting evidently derives from those paintings, as an early local copy.)<sup>338</sup>

Though the main subject of the thangka is a saintly biography, the throne back of its main figure contains Beri stylistic elements, such as the elaborate backrest arch with *makara* scrollwork tails. Note how wide its supporting pillars have become: each segment of the pillar contains a mythical animal. Otherwise one can sense the presence of Menri usages, but not as strongly as in Figure 8.18, a slightly later commission by a patron of the Sakya School.

FIG. 7.32

Abbot of Narthang with Lineage  
1420s–1440s

Dimensions not specified

Narthang Monastery, Tsang Province

Literature: I-se Liu 1957, fig. 18; and M. Rhie in M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, p. 54.

#### A PAINTING FROM THE KADAMPA ORDER

Figure 7.32 was introduced above as Figure 4.11, as a painting whose main figure was wrongly identified as Sakya Pandita. Its lineage is clearly made up of Kadampa masters, presumably abbots of Narthang since the thangka was found and photographed in that monastery. The





FIG. 7.33  
Six-handed Mahākāla with Geluk Lineage  
1434–1450s  
34 5⁄8 x 29 1⁄2 in. (88 x 75 cm)  
Museum der Kulturen Basel, Essen  
Collection  
Literature: G. Essen and T. Thingo 1989,  
vol. 1, no. 132; and vol. 2, no. 387.

[L]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		16											17		
	18														19

lineage has been reconstructed and presented above. Its first two gurus are clearly Atiśa and Dromtön. The thangka has been previously dated to the second half of the thirteenth century, but the lineage points to a considerably later period. If the lineage portrayed is the Kadampa teachers of Narthang, the final figure would be guru 19 in the Narthang lineage, namely Sönam Chokdrup (bSod nams mchog grub), abbot of Narthang from 1418 to 1433.

Though we only have this black and white illustration to work with, the painting clearly exemplifies a refined Beri style of the mid-fifteenth century, with gorgeous scrollwork and gold brocade details. Only the two-tiered shrine in the backrest and the probably multi-color series of rounded bumps around the head nimbus of the main figure hint at other stylistic influences. Indeed, those are well-established elements of the old Pāla style that may express specifically the Kadampa identity of the painting.

### BERI PAINTINGS FOR EARLY GELUK PATRONS

Since the Geluk tradition was founded by Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) and his disciples during the second half of the Universal Beri period, its earliest paintings were naturally painted in the Beri style. But some of those paintings do incorporate interesting sectarian differences.

Figure 7.33 depicts the six-handed protective deity Mahākāla, bursting with energy to remove obstacles of those practicing Buddhism, assisted by four companion deities. It is a careful work of the Beri style and not only possesses excellent decorative features but also careful gold inscriptions beneath each figure. The main deity is surrounded by gurus of a tradition that culminates in early lamas of the Geluk tradition.



Here the esoteric traditions of the Six-armed Protector have been transmitted through their Shangpa Kagyü lineage, originating with Khyungpo Naljor. What is surprising about the lineal lamas is that all of them, from Khyungpo Naljor onward, are shown as pundit monks wearing yellow pointed (i.e., Geluk-style) hats. This may have been a choice of the patron, possibly influenced by sectarian preferences. At least one other portrayal of the same Shangpa Kagyü lineage for this deity shows those lamas who do wear hats (not all do) in red ones (compare Fig. 7.8). But among the last four gurus, three are hatless, and only Tsongkhapa wears a yellow hat.

The structure of the lineal gurus is shown in diagram [L]. The gurus portrayed are:<sup>339</sup>

1. Vajradhara (rDo rje 'chang)
2. Śavari (Sha ba ri)
3. Maitripa (Mi kri pa)
4. Rāhula (Ra'u la)
5. Khedrup Khyungpo Naljor (mKhas grub Khyung po rNal 'byor)
6. Mokjokpa Rinchen Tsöndrū (mNyam med [Rmog lcog pa] Rin chen brtson 'grus)
7. Öntön Kyergangpa Chökyi Sengge (dBon ston Skyer khang [=sgang] pa Chos kyi seng ge)
8. Nyentön Bepay Naljor (sNyan [=Gnyan] ston sBas pa'i rnal 'byor)
9. Chöje Sanggye Tönpa (Chos rje Sangs rgyas ston pa)
10. Khedrup Shangtön Chenpo (mKhas grub Shangs ston chen po)
11. Müchen Gyaltshen Palzangpo (Mus chen rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po)
12. Ngakchang Dorje Shönnu (sNgags 'chang rDo rje bshad [=gzhon nu])
13. Nyamme Namkhe Naljor (mNyam med Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor)
14. Khedrup Gelek Palzang (mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang)
15. Nang Sanggye Öser (Nang Sangs rgyas 'od zer)
16. Khechok Yönten Gyatsho (mKhas

mchog Yon tan rgya mtsho)

17. Lobpön Samdrup Paljor (sLob dpon bSam grub dpal 'byor)
18. Omniscient Lord Losang Drakpa (rJe Thams cad mkhyen pa Blo bzang grags pa)
19. Dülldzin Drakpa Gyaltshen (sLob dpon Rin po che 'Dul 'dzin pa)

This closely follows up to number 14 the lineage recorded by the Fifth Dalai Lama, though it omits the goddess Yeshe kyi Khandroma (Ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma) as guru number 2 and adds Rāhula as number 4: The last main guru, according to normal lineage order, would be guru number 19, Dülldzin Drakpa Gyaltshen ('Dul 'dzin Grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1374–1434).<sup>340</sup> That he was a strict adherent of the Vinaya may account for his not wearing a hat.

The structure indicates that the last two gurus in his lineage were number 18, the “Omniscient Lord Losang Drakpa” (rJe Thams cad mkhyen pa Blo bzang grags pa), i.e., Tsongkhapa, and number 19, his great disciple the “Precious Teacher Dülldzinpa” (Slob dpon Rin po che 'Dul 'dzin pa), i.e., Dülldzin Drakpa Gyaltshen ('Dul 'dzin Grags pa rgyal mtshan). Their larger size indicates their great importance to the patron.

In the early years after Tsongkhapa's passing, Dülldzinpa enjoyed great respect as one of Tsongkhapa's two main successors (along with Gyaltshab Darma Rinchen, second abbot of Ganden). Within a generation or so, he was supplanted as the second great disciple by Khedup Je, third abbot of Ganden, whose polemics did much to sharpen divisions among Tibetan Buddhist schools. The present lineage seems at first sight odd for including the All-knowing Khedrup (mKhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa), i.e., Khedrup Gelek Palzang (mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang, 1385–1438), out of order in position number 14, several generations

before both Tsongkhapa and Dülldzin Drakpa Gyaltshen. But the position of his name is correct following the lineage records, though the chronology of the last figures after him may be deceiving.

Thanks to its inscriptions, we can confidently attribute the painting to an early Geluk patronage. A colophon-like inscription specifies that its patron was a monk named Sherab Gyatso (Shes rab rgya mtsho), who commissioned it in memory of his own glorious guru.

## BERI PORTRAITS OF TSONGKHAPA

The earliest portraits of the master Tsongkhapa were also painted in varieties of the Beri style. As examples of portraits of Tsongkhapa with his lineages, I present here two predominately red-palette Beri paintings, followed by one in a green landscape style, the Menri. The first two thangkas date to the last few decades of the Universal Beri style.

Figure 7.34 depicts Tsongkhapa, founder of the Geluk, surrounded by his two main spiritual lineages and episodes from his esoteric spiritual life (*gsang ba'i rnam thar*). He appears here as the culmination of two long Indo-Tibetan religious lineages, whose gurus are individually portrayed around the outer edge of the painting, as shown in diagram [M].

The sequence of the two lineages accords with established convention. I follow the names as presented by Tucci, which are incomplete and a little confusing, since he took them to be a single lineage with arbitrary repetitions. The painting actually depicts two distinct Indian lineages, which unite and become a single current when brought to Tibet by Atiśa, though they continue to be portrayed in paintings as separate lineages. The Kadampa Madhyamaka lineage on the left seems to be:<sup>341</sup>

1. Buddha
2. Mañjuśrī ('Jam dbyangs pa)
3. Nāgārjuna (Klu sgrub)





FIG. 7.34  
Tsongkhapa with two Kadampa Lineages  
and Episodes of His Life  
Western Tibet; ca. 1480s  
33 x 27 ½ in. (83.8 x 69.8 cm)  
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Nasli  
and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of  
Paul Mellon, 1968 (68.8.117)  
Photograph: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts  
Literature: P. Pal 1997, no. 26; P. Pal 1987,  
fig. 1; and G. Tucci 1949, p. 339ff., no. 10,  
plates 8–12.

4. Candrakīrti (Zla ba grags pa)
5. Rig pa'i khu [byug che ba]  
(Vidyakokila the Greater)
6. Khu [byug chung ba] (Vidyakokila  
the Lesser)
7. Atiśa
8. Dromtönpa ('Brom ston pa)
9. Neusurpa (sNe'u zur pa)
10. Thakmapa (dBu [=Thag] ma pa)
11. Namkha yeshe (Nam mkha' ye shes)
12. Namkha Gyalpo (Nam mkha' rgyal  
po)
13. Yeshe Gyalpo (Ye shes rgyal po)
14. Namkha Gyaltshe (Nam mkha'  
rgyal mtshan)
15. Tsongkhapa (Thams cad mkhyen Blo  
bzang grags)
16. Changsem Ngawang Trakpa (Byang  
sems Ngag dbang grags pa)

[M]													
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2b	3b	4b	5b	6b	7b	
8												8b	
9												9b	
10												10b	
11												11b	
12												12b	
13							27					13b	
14												14b	
15						28	29					15b	
16												16b	
17												17b	
18												18b	
19												19b	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	d2	d1	23b	22b	21b	20b	

Gurus 17 through 26 on the left side of this thangka were apparently not inscribed, for Tucci's list breaks off with guru number 16.

In his own record of teachings, Tsongkhapa gives an account of this lineage that is nearly contemporaneous to the painting. There he records a similar lineage for the Stages of the Path (*Lam rim*) teachings in the tradition of the Kadampa master Gönpawa (dGon pa ba), which he received from Khenchen Namkha Gyaltshe (mKhan chen Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan). He begins the lineage with Atiśa and does not provide the Indian lineage leading up to him.<sup>342</sup>



1. Jowoje (Jo bo rje, Atiśa)  
[Dromtön, ‘Brom ston?]
2. Gönpawa? (dGon pa ba?)
3. Neusurpa (sNe’u zur pa)
4. Thakma Kachen (Thag ma dka’  
chen)
5. Namkha Sengge (Nam seng, i.e.,  
Nam mkha’ seng ge)
6. Namkha Gyalpo (Nam mkha’ rgyal  
po)
7. Sengge Zangpo (Seng ge bzang  
po)<sup>343</sup>
8. Khenchen Namkha Gyaltshe  
(mKhan chen Nam mkha’ rgyal  
mtshan pa)
9. Tsongkhapa

That is also, Tsongkhapa states (ibid.), his lineage for vows or refuge and the higher and lower bodhisattva vows.<sup>344</sup> He records a little later a different lineage for his study of the seminal *Lamp of the Path* treatise by Atiśa.<sup>345</sup> (I will give the Fifth Dalai Lama’s later listing of this lineage in connection with Figure 7.35.)

The names that Tucci lists for the Kadampa Yogācāra lineal masters on the right side of Figure 7.34 are:<sup>346</sup>

1. Buddha
- 2b. Maitreya (Byams pa)
- 3b. Asaṅga (Thogs med)
- 4b. Vasubandhu (dByig gnyen)
- 5b. Vimuktasena (rNam grol sde)
- 6b. Bhadanta Vimuktasena (bTsun pa  
[rNam] grol sde)
- 7b. [mChog gi] sde
- 8b. Vinītadeva (Dul ba’i lha),  
[Is the next guru, Zhi ba ‘tsho  
(Kamalaśīla), wrongly omitted? He  
is listed here by the Fifth Dalai  
Lama.]
- 9b. Vairocana (rNam snang mdzad)
- 10b. Hariḥhadra (Seng bzang)
- 11b. Kuśalin the Greater (Ku su li che  
ba)
- 12b. Kuśalin the Lesser (Ku su li  
chung ba)

- 13b. Dharmakīrti of Sumatra (gSer gling  
pa)
- 14b. Atiśa
- 15b. Dromtönpa (‘Brom ston pa)
- 16b. Palden Gönpawa (dPal ldan dGon  
pa ba)
- 17b. Shenye Neusurpa (bShes gnyen  
sNe zur pa)
- 18b. Changsem Thakmapa (Byang sems  
Thog [=Thag] ma pa)
- 19b. Namkha Sengge (Nam mkha’ seng  
ge)
- 20b. Namkha Gyalpo (Nam mkha’ rgyal  
po)
- 21b. Yeshe Gyalpo (Ye shes rgyal po)<sup>347</sup>
- 22b. Namkha Gyaltshe (Nam mkha’  
rgyal mtshan)
- 23b. Tsongkhapa (Thams cad mkhyen pa  
Blo bzang grags pa)
- 24b. “This is the niche for the Root  
Guru” (*rtsa ba’i bla ma ga’o yin*)
- d1. khyi tra ba la (Kṣetrapāla, a protec-  
tive deity)
- d2. las gshin (Las kyi gshin rje, a protec-  
tive deity)

Directly relevant to this, Tsongkhapa records a longer lineage for the Kadampa Stages of the Path teachings as received from Khenchen Chökyab Zangpo (mKhan chen Chos skyabs bzang po):<sup>348</sup>

1. Sangs rgyas (Buddha)
2. Byams pa (Maitreya)
3. Thogs med (Asaṅga)
4. dByig gnyen (Vasubandhu)
5. Sthiramati (Blo brtan)
6. and 7. Kuśalin the Greater (Ku su li  
che ba) and Kuśalin the Lesser (Ku  
sā li che ba and Ku sā li chung ba)
8. gSer gling pa (Dharmakīrti of  
Sumatra)

After guru number 9, Atiśa, the lineage continues down to:

18. Tshonapa (mTsho sna ba), who  
transmitted it to:
19. Möntrabpa Tshultrim Tashi (Mon

- grab pa Tshul khriṃs bkra shis)
20. Khenchen Chökyab Zangpo (mKhan  
chen Chos skyabs bzang po)
21. Tsongkhapa  
(I will present the Fifth Dalai Lama’s  
version of this second main lineage  
below, in connection with Figure 7.35.)

The central guru of the thangka, Tsongkhapa, holds his hands in the gesture of teaching and wears a slightly pointed red pundit’s hat. Two of his early great disciples, Dülzin Drakpa Gyaltshe and Gyaltshe Darma Rinchen, stand to his right and left as attendants, but they do not wear hats.

The remaining minor human figures belong to two lineages, one from Maitreya on the left and the other from Mañjuśrī on the right. All the teachers are shown as learned monks or pundits, wearing the appropriate hats. These smaller hats, however, are all pointed and alternate in color: red and yellow. About twenty-six gurus in all are shown on the left side, but four fewer on the right.

Here the central figure (27), the famed founder of the so-called Yellow-hat School, has been depicted wearing a hat that is not quite as pointed and is colored, oddly enough, red. What could account for this unexpected color?

Throughout most of the history of his school, a portrait of Tsongkhapa without his typical yellow hat would be unthinkable. Yet previous studies have attributed this remarkable painting to western Tibet and dated it to about 1480, roughly two generations after Tsongkhapa’s death. Tucci did find this painting at Toling in Guge, and I suspect that the hat color and depictions of Tsongkhapa’s main disciples are both indications of an earlier dating of the original composition on which the painting was based, such as to the 1420s or 1430s. Tucci found the name “The Bodhisattva Ngawang Trakpa” (Byang sems Ngag dbang grags pa) in the left column, fourth guru from the bottom, just below Tsongkhapa (The





FIG. 7.35  
Tsongkhapa with Two Kadampa Lineages  
Ca. 1420s–1460s  
25 x 31 in. (63.50 x 78.74 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.31.14 (HAR 595)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 123.

Omniscient Losang Trakpa, and identified him as the lama who introduced the Geluk tradition in Guge.<sup>349</sup>

This painting is rendered in a true Beri style, with a classic Newar backrest arch and detailed scrollwork patterns in Tsongkhapa's dark blue backrest, which is outlined with strips of white, red, and golden flames. This, too, would fit a dating to the first half of the fifteenth century in central Tibet, but the style might also be possible to find in Guge in the second half of the same century.

Figure 7.35 again portrays the great Tsongkhapa with his two main Kadampa lineages, here without episodes from his spiritual life. I estimate that the painting dates to the mid-fifteenth century, within a generation or two of its main subject's life.

The painter has employed some traditional Beri scrollwork to beautify the dark blue backrests of minor figures. Behind the main figure and two disciples, he has painted a fairly simple three-lobed arch. Though it is supported to the right and left by traditional Newar three-part pillars (with a vase at its base), that is the only Beri arch element present. (The red background of the central arch is filled with a complicated pattern of repeated floral, i.e., lotus, motifs.)

The head nimbus of the main figure is particularly noteworthy for its lack of Beri elements. Instead, the painter or commissioner decided to include an ancient Pāla halo of the early Kadampa tradition. (See Fig. 7.35a.)

Figure 7.35 also portrays the venerable Tsongkhapa with two Kadampa

[N]													
6	5	4	3	2	1	2b	3b	4b	5b	6b	7b		
7											8b		
8											9b		
9											10b		
10						25					11b		
11			26				27				12b		
12											13b		
13											14b		
14											15b		
15	16	17	18	19			20b	19b	18b	17b	16b		
20	21	22	23	24			25b	24b	23b	22b	21b		





FIG. 7.35A  
Detail from Fig. 7.35



FIG. 7.36 (detail of Fig. 5.5)  
Two Kadampa Masters  
Mid-12th century  
21 x 15 ½ in. (53.3 x 39.4 cm)  
Private Collection  
Literature: S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998,  
no. 11.

lineages, but with intriguing stylistic differences. Compare its main figure's head nimbus with those in Figure 7.36, a Pāla-style double portrait of Kadampa masters datable to the twelfth century. The distinctive nimbuses allow us to conclude that this second painting of Tsongkhapa (Fig. 7.35) exemplifies Beri art in which a few prominent Neo-Kadampa or Neo-Pāla elements have been reintroduced, evidently to show artistically that Tsongkhapa was the founder of a New Kadampa (bKa' gdams gsar ma) Order. There is some justification for calling the new Geluk Order New Kadampas, since Tsongkhapa and his early followers traced a few of their main lineages (including those shown here) back to Atiśa through the saintly early Kadampa masters, while advancing new scholastically refined interpretations of Madhyamaka and (unlike the Old Kadampa) practicing Anuttarayoga Tantra as their main inner practice.

This second painting of Tsongkhapa (Fig. 7.35) has the structure shown in diagram [N]. Thus, the painting depicts about fifty gurus in all. The two lineages clearly begin above in the middle, with each of the two bodhisattvas, one to the right and one to the left of the central buddha. We can gain a good idea of which masters have been portrayed from the Fifth Dalai Lama's record of teachings received. The lineage for the Yogācāra tradition of Maitreya transmitted by the Kadampa is:<sup>350</sup>

1. The Buddha (Sangs rgyas Zas gtsang sras po)
2. Maitreya (rGyal ba Ma pham pa)
3. Asaṅga (Shing rta chen po Thogs med)
4. Vasubandhu (mKhas mchog dByig gnyen)
5. Ārya Vimuktasena ('Phags pa rNam grol sde)













FIG. 7.38  
Mandala of Red Vajravārāhī with Lineage  
1430–1460  
19 ½ x 14 ½ in. (49.53 x 36.83 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.7.1 (HAR 94)

[P]												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7(K1)	8	9	10(K2)	11	12	
13(K3)		14	ga1	ga2	ga3	ga4	ga5	ga6	ga7	ga8	15(K4)	16
k												k
		17							18(K5)			
		19							20			

this painting. It, too, portrays the master Tsongkhapa with his two main lineages. The final lineal gurus below date the painting to about the mid- or late sixteenth century, by which time patronizing Menri painters had become usual in many Geluk circles of Ü and Tsang Provinces of central Tibet. Only one figure in the painting was named by an inscription beneath him: Tsongkhapa's main disciple Gyaltsab Darma Rinchen. The two lineages above Tsongkhapa unite in his person and then pass down through the individual masters in the later combined lineage. The thangka has the structure shown in diagram [O].

Of the two groups or fields of lineage masters, the Yogācāra one on the left, which begins with Maitreya, has eighteen gurus in all, counting Buddha Śākyamuni. Of these, eleven are Indians. On the right side, the Madhyamaka lineage beginning with Mañjuśrī has again eighteen masters, but this time only the top row of gurus, which includes four humans, are from India. By now the Geluk tradition was established enough that its patrons could have some early gurus in the lineage painted with red hats. Of approximately sixteen pundits on both sides, both Indian and Tibetan, about half of them wear red hats and the others wear yellow.

The main lama of recent generations, guru number 30, is eleven spiritual generations later than Tsongkhapa and flourished, I would estimate, in the mid- or late sixteenth century. From its style I would classify the painting as from a Menri of Tsang Province from about the 1560s to 1580s. Note the rows of monochrome clouds, with gold outlining, and also the treatment of gold rays of light along the edge of Tsongkhapa's red outer body nimbus. Notice also the blue backrests of Tsongkhapa's two main disciples who now sit.





FIG. 7.39 (detail of Fig. 0.5)  
Vajradhara with Karma Kagyü Lineage or  
Line of Trulkus  
1540–1570  
20 x 18 in. (50.80 x 45.72cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.444 (HAR 903)

[Q]								
A	B(K)	C	D	E	F(K)	G(K)	6	
H(K)	2	3			4	5	7(K1)	
I(K)							8(K2?)	
13(K7?)							9(K3?)	
d							10(K4)	
14(K8?)			1				11(K5)	
15							12(K6)	

#### LATE KARMA KAGYÜ PATRONAGE OF THE BERI

Lamas of the Karma Kagyü continued to prominently patronize Beri painting from the mid-fifteenth century until at least the mid-sixteenth century. One example is Figure 7.38, which portrays a mandala of Red Vajravārāhī with lineage gurus and associated masters. A work of Karma Kagyü patronage, it dates to about the third quarter of the fifteenth century, the last few decades of the Universal Beri period.

In the painting the lineage is arranged with gurus and famous Indian masters as shown in diagram [P]. The painting depicts above the mandala only five historical Karmapas (shown in the diagram as K1 through K5), though I did not assign numbers to the two much smaller ones (k), who appear at both ends of the third row. It does not portray its patron, but he would have been a contemporary of the Sixth Karmapa Thongwa Dönden (1416–1453), who is

likewise not shown. As in Figure 7.40, this painting shows the Eight Great Adepts (abbreviated “ga”) on the second line (shown as ga1 through ga8). Here the third great adept, Nāgārjuna, with his black snake hoods, can be easily mistaken for a black-hat Karmapa.

Though not a work of great elegance, the painting very competently portrays its deities and mandalas. In particular, the central mandala includes a multicolor outer border and large fields of red and dark blue all filled with ornate scrollwork. Most minor deities are not placed in arches, but the four buddhas in the third horizontal row occupy simple arches of Newar inspiration.

Figure 7.39 depicts the top half of a *thangka* already introduced as Figure 0.5. It shows Vajradhara surrounded by Karma Kagyü lineal gurus or a line of incarnate lamas. It is painted in a Beri style that is one century later than Figure 7.38. The painting begins and ends with lineal gurus, but in the middle the line-

age consists mainly of the great Karmapa reincarnate lamas. (Hence it actually portrays a mixed group of trulkus and lineal gurus and not a pure lineage.) The top line does not depict lineal masters, except the final figure, as shown in diagram [Q].

Figures B, F, G, H, and I of the top three lines evidently portray different aspects of Karmapas (K), and not different historical embodiments. The true lineage of gurus begins with the central figure, Vajradhara (1), and continues at least to number 7(K1), the First Karmapa Dūsūm Khyenpa (1110–1193). The inscriptions, as far as I could read them, yield the names:

- B. Chos rgyal Kar rma pa (*sic*) [“King of Dharma, Karmapa”]
- D. rDo rje sems dpa’ (Vajrasattva)
- F. Rig ‘dzin Kar rma pa (“Vidyadhara Karmapa”)
- G. Grub dbang Kar rma pa (“Lord of Adepts, Karmapa”)
- 6. Dag ... (*sic*) [probably referring to Dags po Lha rje, i.e., Gampopa]
- 10. Rol pa’i rdo rje
- 11. De [bzhin] gshegs [pa]
- 12. mThong [ba] don [ldan]

Could guru number 14 be the Eighth Karmapa Mikyö Dorje (Mibskyod rdo rje 1507–1554)? I read something like “Mikyö Dorje” on the available photograph. If so, then gurus 13 and 14 in the left column may be the last two Karmapas shown, bringing the lineage down to the mid-sixteenth century. Several inscriptions are cut off by the edge of the frame.



[R]	4	3	2	1	12(K3)	13	14(K4)	15
	5	ga1	ga2	ga3	ga4	ga5	ga6	ga7 16(K5)
	6	17						
	7(K1)							18(K6)
	8							19
	9							20(K7)
	10 (K2)				V			21
	11							22
	d	23						
		d						P

The painting demonstrates that the Karma Kagyü patrons continued to commission paintings in a Beri style well into the sixteenth century. Lac-dye scrollwork, highlighted with gold, is found in the red body halo of the main figure. But note the stylized dark blue indigo brocade patterns of clouds instead of Newar scrollwork in the blue background.

Figure 7.40 portrays the primeval tantric guru and Buddha Vajradhara surrounded by a Karma Kagyü lineage. I found no inscriptions on this painting, but the lineage could be recognized through its iconography. Here again the Eight Great Adepts of India (ga1–ga7) appear above in the middle of the second line, as in Figure 7.38. We need to bracket them out to make sense of the lineal structure, shown in diagram [R].

This lineage starts at the middle, goes left and down the left column, returns to top center, then goes right and down the right column. It thus has the same lineal structure as Figure 2.17. Several gurus are iconographically distinct, such as Orgyenpa, the main teacher of the Third Karmapa. The total number of Karmapas shown is seven. The painting would thus seem to date to about three generations after the Seventh Karmapa, approximately the time of the Eighth or Ninth Karmapas, i.e., the mid- or late sixteenth century.

Note the even number of gurus on the top row, a structural rarity. The next

row also depicts an even number of figures, ten, which suitably accommodates the fixed grouping of Eight Great Adepts. The final three lamas in the right column (numbers 21, 22, and 23) wear special ceremonial hats that are partly orange, and presumably they represent Karma Kagyü lamas who wore such hats. The first (21) was a disciple of the Seventh Karmapa. The final lama with such a hat (number 23) was probably the guru of the patron (P), who is depicted directly below him.

Gold Newar decorative scrollwork is easily visible in the dark blue background, marking this thangka stylistically as a later continuation of the Beri. Less prominent scrollwork can be found in other fields of color.

### CONCLUSIONS

During its heyday from about the 1360s to 1450s, the Beri style seems to have enjoyed for about a century the status of a universal style among Tibetan patrons and painters. Strangely enough, it replaced the Pāla style in about 1350 or 1360, and thus it became, whether by accident or design, the sole style patronized by the Phagmotru-dynasty rulers during most of their rule. Previous historians such as Snellgrove and Richardson considered the early Phagmotrupa period to have been a time in which Yuan-imposed elements such as “Mongolized dress, laws customs and authority” were

FIG. 7.40  
Vajradhara with a Karma Kagyü Lineage  
1540–1570  
25 ½ x 23 ¾ in. (64.8 x 59.4 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.582 (HAR 1078)

rejected.<sup>354</sup> Yet in the realm of religious art, no blanket rejection of “foreign” styles occurred, certainly not of the Newar-inspired Beri style that the Yuan court had institutionalized but which was not Mongolian in nature.

The style lost its status as universal in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, when Menthangpa and Khyentse Chenmo, after assimilating a new Chinese aesthetic, began practicing their brilliant new stylistic syntheses. The search of the Geluk School for its doctrinal identity may also have added religious pressures for changing to a new style, including one that might be considered New Kadampa. But even then, the Beri maintained a strong following in certain other religious schools (Karma Kagyü and Ngorpa) and in certain locales (western Tibet).











ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS later sites of Beri patronage in Tibet was the monastery of Ngor Ewam Chöden (Ewam chos ldan). Founded in 1429 by Ngorchen, it stood in a remote hilly area of Tsang Province, about twelve miles (twenty kilometers) southwest of the important district seat Shigatse. Ngorchen founded it as an independent monastery, spiritually beholden but not administratively subordinated to his original mother monastery, Sakya.

At his new monastery, Ngorchen instituted a stricter monastic rule than practiced at Sakya, one aspect of his fervent revival of the Sakya School's monasticism and religious practice. Ngor Monastery immediately became an important place for monks wanting to take ordination and carefully observe the monastic rules under the supervision of senior disciplined monks. In this remote location, it was easier to enforce strict rules and exclude things or people that the Vinaya rules forbade. The monastery also became one of the most renowned and active centers of tantric teaching and study within the Sakya School, attracting some of the brightest religious students of that school's younger generation. They came from all over Tibet, wishing also to receive initiations and esoteric instructions from Ngorchen, who was revered as Vajradhara in human form.

Based at this monastery, Ngorchen and his successors founded a dynamic new suborder of the Sakya School, one

of two or three to emerge in the fifteenth century.<sup>355</sup> In Ngorchen's time and in the following two centuries, the religious influence of Ngor and its abbots extended westward to parts of western Tibet, including Mustang and Dolpo Districts within present-day northwestern Nepal, and eastward to Kham.

Though Ngorchen never visited Kham, he visited and blessed Lo Mustang no fewer than three times. The successive Mustang kings remained devoted supporters of Ngor and its several branch monasteries in their domain. The abbots of Ngor quickly established a staunch following also among lay patrons and lords in many parts of Kham Province in eastern Tibet, becoming a quasi state religion for the principalities of Derge (sDe dge) and Gapa (sGa pa and sKyu ra Districts in eastern Nangchen).<sup>356</sup>

#### LINKS WITH THE SAKYA CHIEF LAMAS (DAGCHEN) OF THE SHITHOK PALACE AND CHUMIG ESTATE

Ngorchen was born at Sakya in 1382, and to all outward appearances his father was a prominent lay official retainer at Sakya named Pöntshang Druppa Yönten (dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan), who held the position of "Great Attendant of the Sakya assembly" (*sa skya tshogs kyi nye gnas chen po*).<sup>357</sup> He had risen to that position by first serving as personal valet (*gsol ja ba*) to the head lama of the Shithokpa Palace at Sakya, who was then the senior ranking lama of Sakya.

The official patrilineage of Ngorchen through this father was the ancient Jokro (lCog ro) clan. In Ngorchen's generation, this same family provided another prominent functionary and religious scholar to Sakya Monastery, Laychen Shönnu Sengge.<sup>358</sup>

That paternity, however, was just a convenient fiction. Ngorchen's true father was an even higher personage. He was, in fact, the highest lama of Sakya, Tawen Kunga Rinchen (Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, 1339–1399) of the Shitok Lama Palace (bZhi thog bla brang). That master acknowledged his paternity indirectly in 1389, when he had to leave Sakya. At that time, when Ngorchen was still a boy of only seven or eight years, the great lama gave several costly presents to one of the most eminent monks in residence at Sakya, Sharchen Yeshe Gyaltshe (Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan), asking him to care for and see to the future education of his son, then a young monk.

Ngorchen's father and paternal relations, the lamas of the Shithok Palace, descended from the senior son of the great later progenitor of the Sakya Khön family, Dagnyi Chenpo Zangpo Pal. During the Phagmotru period, the lamas from that palace were the most powerful branch of that family, providing three of the four Sakya throne holders during Ngorchen's lifetime:

17. Tawen Kunga Rinchen of the Shitok Palace (1339–1399), tenure circa 1364–1399
18. Gushri Lotrö Gyaltshe (Blo gros

Detail of Fig. 8.9





FIG. 8.1  
Ngor Monastery before 1959  
Photograph of Khangsar Topla  
Literature: D. Jackson 2003b, fig. 52;  
*Chöyang* journal 1991, p. 63.

- rgyal mtshan) of the Shithok Palace (1366–1420), circa 1399–1420
19. Jamyang Namkha Gyaltsen (‘Jam dbyangs nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan) of the Rinchengang (Rin chen sgang) Palace (1398–1472), circa 1421–1441
20. Kunga Wangchuk of the Shithok Palace (1418–1462), circa 1442–1462

By his two official consorts, Tawen Kunga Rinchen had two sons: the Sakya Khön lamas Gushri Lotrö Gyaltsen (listed above as 18) and Drakpa Lotrö (1377–1437), who were Ngorchen’s half brothers. The first succeeded his father as Sakya throne holder in about 1399, and his son, Kunga Wangchuk, also served in that capacity later. These lamas maintained close links with Ngorchen and supported his activities. A standard later biography lists them prominently at

the head of Ngorchen’s main patrons and disciples. The younger half-brother, lama Drakpa Lotrö, and his son Lotrö Wangchuk (Blo gros dbang phyug, b. 1402) were called the “[Sakya] Head Lamas (Dagchen) of Chumig” (*bdag chen chu mig pa*), from their residence estate at Chumig, which lay a considerable distance east of Sakya, but only about nine miles (fifteen kilometers) southwest of Shigatse and close to the old Kadampa monastery of Narthang.

Ngorchen’s true paternity opened many doors for his religious studies as a youth at Sakya and his later career. He was allowed, for instance, access to the main old libraries of Sakya, which enabled him to study the writings of the early Sakya founders widely and deeply. Ngorchen later recorded in his catalog to the tantric commentaries (*rGyud ‘grel gyi dkar chag*) that he had read nearly one thousand volumes in the Gurum Library (dGu rum dpe mdzod) and more than sixteen hundred volumes of Sakya Pandita’s books in the “dGu rtse” (the library in the upper floor of the Gurum Library). His wide reading included more than twenty major commentaries on the Hevajra Root Tantra alone by previous masters of the Sakya School.<sup>359</sup>

Even later, when deciding to found Ngor Monastery where he did, Ngorchen’s familial link played a significant role. The future location of Ngor was a remote area of hilly grazing land where people sometimes went to cut brush for firewood. One of Ngorchen’s disciples in the mid- or late 1420s first discovered the promising spot while staying at Chumig and going out into the hills to collect firewood. The land belonged to the Chumig estate, and hence his younger half-brother, Drakpa Lotrö of Chumig, would have been happy just to let Ngorchen use it for his new retreat or monastery. But to avoid possible ownership disputes in the future, Ngorchen insisted on giving his relatives some valuables, including a crystal cup, as a formal payment.

Ngorchen’s founding of Ngor in the late 1420s brought closer to fruition his desire to transmit faithfully and purely the rich spiritual legacy of the Sakya founders to his students and later generations. He must have considered it impossible to achieve his project of revitalizing monastic practice at the old seat of Sakya, which as the capital of the previous government had become a veritable town, full of laymen, laywomen, and nuns.

A few years before founding Ngor, while in his early forties, Ngorchen was forced to assume much responsibility for the Sakya School. In 1425, when Thekchen Chöje passed way, that school and the Sakya Khön family lost their most eminent representative, who had been honored as the Ming emperor’s preceptor. The same year, when the learned tantric expert within Tsongkhapa’s new Geluk Order, Khedrubje, wrote his anti-Sakya tantric polemics, it fell to Ngorchen to reply.

Though Ngorchen’s written answers temporarily pacified the heightened sectarian tensions, two years later, in 1427, Khedrubje tried to engineer a public doctrinal confrontation with



Rongtön Sheja Kunrik (1367–1449), another preeminent Sakyapa doctrinal luminary who was eighteen years his senior and mainly based in Ü Province. When at the last minute the prince of Gyantse stepped in and prevented a planned public debate, the disappointed Khedrupje suddenly resigned the abbacy of the Gyantse Monastery. Rongtön had recently helped the Rinpung lords found a multisectarian monastic complex at the site of the Rinpung Great Maitreya Statue and Temple where scholarship of the Sakya Order was strongly represented (but which also included Geluk and Bodong colleges).<sup>360</sup> Khedrupje, on the other hand, was still exerting himself to achieve doctrinal hegemony for his new Geluk School through conversions, polemics, and other means. He had little patience with prominent representatives of the older schools or broad-minded patrons. He had in recent years done his utmost to maximize the doctrinal divide between the followers of Tsongkhapa (in 1427 just eight years deceased) and the original religious school from which Tsongkhapa and his exceptional guru and chief spiritual inspiration, Rendawa, had come.<sup>361</sup> (Among Tsongkhapa's gurus, Rendawa had done the most to groom Tsongkhapa doctrinally and philosophically and to propel him upon his extraordinary career as religious teacher, a fact that was becoming an embarrassment to the more doctrinaire defenders of the new school, who wanted to stress Tsongkhapa's significance as a major break with the past.)

Thus in 1429, when Ngorchen founded Ngor, his task had been made urgent by ongoing sectarian provocations. (Khedrupje, for his part, continued to reside in the Nyang Valley of Tsang, though keeping a lower public profile.) Several loyal noble patrons of the Sakya teachings continued to lend staunch support to Ngorchen's religious activities, even in the mid-1420s when he still resided at the Shakzang (Shāk bzang)

stupa in Sakya, before leaving Sakya for Ngor. One early noble patron of note was Amapal, ruler of Lo Mustang. Other sympathetic patrons relatively nearby in Tsang included the rich and powerful lords of Gyantse, Rinpung, and Chudu. Twelve years after the founding of Ngor, Ngorchen reached the pinnacle of official patronage in 1441 when he received a royal invitation to visit the court of Drakpa Jungnay (Grags pa 'byung gnas, 1414–1445) in Neudong in Ü. That ruler had succeeded his uncle, the illustrious King Drakpa Gyaltsen (Gong ma Grags pa rgyal mtshan, d. 1432), after a violent interregnum occasioned by the unsuccessful revolt of the new king's own father. Ngorchen stayed about seven months in Ü Province, and he visited such key seats of patronage and political power as the Gongkar and Rinpung estates while traveling to and from that province.

#### IMPORTANT COMMISSIONS OF NGORCHEN

Ngorchen and his abbatial successors commissioned many important works of religious art, particularly sets of thangka paintings. For at least one important set of painted mandalas, Ngorchen directly patronized Newar painters. The lamas of Ngor did not allow depictions of the higher tantric deities or their mandalas to be painted as murals on the temple walls. (Such paintings depicted, after all, esoteric traditions.) This might account, in part, for the wealth of thangkas that once existed at Ngor. For generations, its abbots actively patronized the making of sacred scroll paintings, which some consider the Later Beri paintings par excellence.

Figure 8.2 depicts as its central figure the great founder of Ngor, Kunga Zangpo, which an inscription beneath confirms: "Homage to the venerable great Vajradhara, Kunga Zangpo."<sup>362</sup> This portrait may have been commis-

sioned during the master's lifetime, or else soon thereafter, by a direct disciple.

Here Ngorchen is shown gazing to the left, face in partial profile. He smiles with kindness, his eyes aglow with illumination. He holds his hands to his chest in a gesture of teaching. He wears a red pundit hat typical of Sakya lamas (*pan zhu*) with broad pointed ear flaps hanging down over his shoulders. These flaps lie flat, nearly reaching his chest. They hang down below his chin a little less than the length of his face (*zhal tshad*) and are about three or four finger widths (*sor mo*) wide. The hat's top or crown is perfectly rounded, seemingly following the upper edge of his cranium and not covering much more of his head than the thickness of the flaps. A thin strip of yellow extends to the bottom of the flaps, presumably to show the edge of a yellow silk inner lining. The hat is identical to that worn by Sakya Pandita, who appears as a minor figure in the painting twice.<sup>363</sup>

Ngorchen wears the special upper robe of a fully ordained monk (Tib. *snam shyar*) which was made according to the ancient rules of Indian Buddhist monastic discipline by sewing together small pieces of cloth. It hangs down over his shoulders and upper arms, also covering his lower body and knees, but leaving his feet exposed. (That robe hangs so low that it covers most of his lower robe, *sham thab*, which is only visible at his waist.) These features of dress are iconographically significant, marking him as a strict adherent to the Vinaya rules who carefully observed even minor rules of dress. The only similarly clad lamas in the lineages depicted below are Sakya Pandita and two smaller depictions of Ngorchen wearing yellow-colored hats.

In four upper corners of the background behind the backrest arch of the main figure, small deities float in the sky, with upper bodies and feet visible, but abdomens hidden behind red clouds.





FIG. 8.2  
 Ngorchen with Two Lineages  
 1430s–1460s  
 34 1/16 x 28 3/8 in. (86.5 x 72 cm)  
 Michael Henss Collection, Zurich



Edges of the body and head nimbuses are decorated with little jewels, and large blue jewels sit in the corners where those two nimbuses meet.

The minor figures along the edges of the painting seem to depict two main lineages: on the right, the gurus of the Hevajra-based Path with the Fruit instructions and on the left, the lineal gurus for the Nairātmyā (bDag med ma) initiation.<sup>364</sup> The structure is not a simple line of descent, and I have reconstructed it as shown in diagram [A].

1. [rDo rje ‘chang] [Vajradhara]
- 2a. [bD]ag med ma
- 2b. bDag med ma
- 3a. Bir wa pa
- 3b. Bir wa pa
- 3c. [Bir wa pa] Lha mnan pa
- 3d. [Bir wa pa] Chos ‘chad
- 3e. [Bir wa pa] gSer ‘gyur
- 3f. [Bir wa pa] Lha dgas pa
4. Nag po pa
5. Da ma ru pa
6. A wa dhu ti pa
7. Ga ya dha ra
8. Shākya ye shes [‘Broḡ mi Lo tsā wa]
9. Se ston
10. Zhang dGon pa ba
- 11(1). Sa skya pa chen po
- 11(2). Bla ma Sa chen
- 12a(1). Slob dpon Rin [p]o [che]
- 12a(2). Slob dpon Rin [p]o [che]
- 13a(1). rJe btsun Chen po
- 13a(2). rJe btsun Chen po
- 14a(1). Chos rje Sa paṇ

- 14a(2). Sa skya Paṇ chen
- 15a. ‘Phag pa
- 15b. Tshogs bsgom
- 16a. [Zhang] dKon mchog dpal
- 16b. Nyan chen pa
- 17(1). Brag phug pa [bSod nams dpal]
- 17(2). [Brag phug pa] bSod nams dpal
- 18(1). Bla ma Dam pa
- 18(2). Bla ma Dam pa
- 19(1). dPal ldan tshul khriṃs
- 19(2). dPal ldan tshul khriṃs
- 20a(1). Buddha shrī
- 20a(2). Buddha shrī
- 20b. Ye [sh]es rgyal m[tsh]an
- 21(1). A nan ta bha dra
- 21(2). A nan ta bha dra

Luckily, the first ten gurus are the standard Sakyapa lineage of the Path with the Fruit. But beginning with generation 11, several things make the structure more difficult to construe. One is the double depiction of the same gurus, and I have indicated the first and second appearance of each master by appending (1) and (2) to his generation number. Another difficulty is the presence of at least three branches in the lineage: one after generation 11, one after generation 14, and one after generation 19. These branches could only be reconstructed by referring to the lineage records of Ngorchen himself. The earliest branch is in fact a fairly obscure side alternative lineage, but thanks to its rarity it allows us to specify which particular teaching line was depicted here. That side lineage

runs: 12b) Netse Baltön (Ne tse sBal ston), 13b) Sherab Trak (Shes rab grags), 14b) Nampar Chöshe ([gNam par] Chos she), and 15b) Wangtsön (dBang brtson, i.e., mNgon pa ba dBang phyug brtson ‘grus), after which that lineage is received by number 15a) Phakpa (‘Phags pa). Number 15b also transmitted this rare side lineage to another disciple, Pandita Dorshe (Paṇḍita rDor she, i.e., rDo rje shes rab), who passed it on to 16a) Shang Könchok Pal (Zhang dKon mchog dpal).

It is legitimate that two of Ngorchen’s teachers are pictured (as 20a twice and as 20b once), since he received this initiation from both. Both lineages end with a figure named Ānandabhadra, which is Sanskrit for Kunga Zangpo, twenty-first in the lineage. Ngorchen was thus depicted three times in all, and since he was the last guru depicted, the patron (P) in the bottom row was probably his direct disciple. An almost illegible inscription names the patron “the Great Abbot of Dra” (*dra mkhan chen pa*). This may refer to an abbot of Drathang Monastery in Lhoka District of southern Ü Province, not far from the Phagmotru capital. One abbot of Drathang during this period was Gewa Gyaltsen (dGe ba rgyal mtshan, 1387–1462), third abbot of Nalendra, who served as abbot of Drathang in the early 1450s.

Figure 8.3 probably portrays Ngorchen as a prominent minor figure in a thangka depicting two tantric lineages that he transmitted. As explained above in connection with Figure 7.29, the two main figures of this painting are Vajradhara and Vajradharma, here as primordial gurus of the Hevajra and Cakrasamvara tantric cycles. Both lineages culminate in the great master with a red hat above the two main figures (guru number 18/\*31 in the chart for that painting given above). The second lineage, that for the elaborate Cakrasamvara initiation following Luipa’s tradition,

[A]								
5	4	3a	2a	1	2b	3b	6	7
8	(3c)	(3d)				(3e)	(3f)	9
10	11(1)						12a(1)	11(2)
13a(1)	13a(2)						14a(2)	12a(2)
14a(1)	15c			21(3)			16c	15a
16a	17(1)						18	12b
17(2)	19(1)						20b	13b
18(2)	19(2)	20a(1)	21(1)		21(2)	20a(2)	15b	14b
d1	d3	d3	P		d4	d5	d6	d7





FIG. 8.3 (detail from Fig. 7.29)  
Ngorchon, from two tantric lineages,  
Hevajra and Cakrasamvara  
Western Tibet; mid-15th century  
35 x 29  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (89 x 74.5 cm)  
Michael J. and Beata McCormick Collection  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1996,  
p. 440, no. 192 (16a).

indicates that this prominent red-hatted lama was Ngorchon, the thirty-first guru in this lineage according to his own record of teachings.<sup>365</sup> The painting thus contains a nearly contemporaneous portrait of Ngorchon.<sup>366</sup>

Like Figure 8.2, this depiction of Ngorchon shows him gazing warmly, but here facing ahead, holding his hands to his chest in the gesture of teaching.<sup>367</sup> He wears a pundit hat of the Sakya tradition with broad pointed ear flaps hanging down over his shoulders. The flaps extend below his chin about the length of his face and are only about two or

three finger widths wide. The hat's top or crown is perfectly rounded, closely following the upper edge of his head, here covering much more of the crown of his head than the thickness of the flaps. (The painter may have first painted a higher, slightly pointed hat, whose upper edge he then modified by painting it over with a darker color.) The hat is trimmed with a thin strip of cloth, here blue, which also extends to the bottom of the flaps, presumably showing its blue silk or brocade lining. The hat is identical to that worn by Sakya Pandita, who appears once below as a minor figure in the painting.

Ngorchon's bare feet are partly visible, but he is also shown wearing an outer robe, covering his full-monk's upper robe (*snam sbyar*) at the shoulders and knees. Such an outer robe is typically worn by Tibetan monks in colder seasons to keep warm, but Ngorchon as a strict follower of the Vinaya is usually shown without it, with his bare feet in full view.

#### NGORCHEN'S PATRONAGE OF NEWAR PAINTERS

Ngaripa Sanggye Phüntshok (mNga' ris pa Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, 1649–1705), twenty-fifth abbot of Ngor, recounts in his biography of Kunga Zangpo much about early sacred art at Ngor. In that biography, which he composed in 1688—232 years after Ngorchon's passing—he describes the following major sets of paintings and sculptures ordered by Ngorchon:<sup>368</sup>

[1] To fulfill the wishes of his deceased teacher Sharchen Yeshe Gyaltsen (Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan, d. 1406), Ngorchon commissioned in the lower inner shrine room (*gtsang khang 'og ma*) of the assembly hall a great gilt statue of the Buddha Śākyamuni with gandhola.<sup>369</sup>



[2] To fulfill the wishes of his deceased teacher Buddhashrī (1339–1419), he commissioned the eleven great paintings (*bris sku chen mo*) of the complete series of Path with the Fruit lineage masters. Furthermore, he commissioned in the upper inner chapel (*gtsang khang steng ma*), which is now called the Path with the Fruit chapel (*lam ‘bras lha khang*), a set of statues of the Path with the Fruit lineage, beginning with a gilt image of Vajradhara and clay images of the subsequent lineage from Nairātmyā to Buddhashrī. He also commissioned a smaller set of clay images of the same Path with the Fruit lineage that were kept in the “Profound Path chapel” (*lam zab kha khang*). On the walls of the lamas’ residence chapels he had painted the lineal masters for the lineages of Hevajra, Cakrasamvara, and Guhyasamāja, as well as innumerable depictions of buddhas and bodhisattvas.<sup>370</sup>



About Path with the Fruit lineage thangkas, Sanggye Phüntshok added a few lines later:

The eleven thangkas that [Ngorchen] commissioned in order to fulfill the wishes of the great adept Buddhashrī, together with the completion of the series with paintings of more recent masters, are hung and displayed every other year at the time of the [Hevajra] Path Consecration, in alternation with the set of golden thangkas (*gser thang*) commissioned by Könchok Palden (dKon mchog dpal ldan, 1526–1590).<sup>371</sup> The continuation of the set of golden thangkas was commissioned by Champa Kunga Tashi (Byams pa kun dga’ bkra shis, 1558–1603?).<sup>372</sup> It was forbidden to move these

FIG. 8.4  
Vajradhara as Original Teacher of the Path with the Fruit Instructions  
1429–1456  
34 x 31 in. (86.4 x 78.7 cm)  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Stella Kramrisch Collection, accession no. 1994-148-634  
Literature: S. Kramrisch 1964, no. 83.

[B]										
d6	d1	d2	d3		d4	d5	d7	d8		
d9		d15				d16		d10		
	gu1						gu2			
d11								d12		
	d17		1				d18			
d13								d14		
d19		2				3		d20		
d21								d22		
d23								d24		
d25								d26		
d27	d29	d30	d31		d32	d33	d34	d28		



paintings from their place of keeping in the Profound Path chapel at Ngor—infractions against this prohibition would be punished by the Dharmapālas!<sup>373</sup>

And for Ngorchen’s third main teacher:

[3] To fulfill the wishes of his deceased teacher Sazang Phakpa Shönnu Lodrö, he commissioned from Newar artists the painting of this complete set of mandalas of the Vajrāvalī cycle, together with three additional mandalas from the Kriyāsamuccaya collection.<sup>374</sup>

Sanggye Phüntshok adds that Ngorchen commissioned a very large number of other scroll paintings depicting both mandalas and pure realms, along with numerous clay statues. He describes the major murals that Ngorchen commissioned, listing the twenty-eight mural sections (*logs ris zhing kham*s) of the main assembly hall at Ngor.<sup>375</sup> Those paintings and sculptures at Ngor dated to the twenty-seven year period from 1429 to 1456, i.e., to between the foundation of that monastery and Ngorchen’s passing. Hence Ngorchen commissioned major works in memory of his teachers even two or three decades after their passing.

Among the treasures of religious art at Ngor mentioned by Sanggye Phüntshok, several disappeared from Ngor in the 1960s and then reappeared in the West. For instance, some of the eleven great paintings of the complete series of Path with the Fruit lineage masters commissioned to fulfill the wishes of his deceased teacher Buddhāshī (1339–1419) were taken from Ngor during the unrest of the early 1960s and, via Nepal or India, found their way into museum or private collections in North America.

Figure 8.4 shows the first painting of this magnificent set. Its main figure

portrays the primordial Buddha Vajradhara, while two lineal gurus stand as minor figures to his right and left. An inscription confirms that this is the painting commissioned by Ngorchen. An indispensable source on this set of paintings is the detailed description (*bris yig*) written by Lowo Khenchen (Glo bo mKhan chen). This description survives in Lowo Khenchen’s writings as the work “Written Description of the Gurus of the Path with the Fruit, together with Lineages.”<sup>376</sup>

In addition to describing each main figure, Lowo Khenchen names a few minor figures. The many minor figures that he does not name individually he at least describes or classifies in general, so that one can identify them if one knows the relevant iconography. His description thus gives an invaluable overview of the set, which survives only in fragments. As he informs us, the minor figures portray, variously, main tantric deities, accompanying deities of their mandalas, the eighty-four adepts, or gurus of other lineages. Lowo Khenchen noted down their arrangement while viewing the originals at Ngor Monastery in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. He highly appreciated the fact that the great master Kunga Zangpo, Vajradhara in person, had designed and used these paintings for his spiritual practice. In recording their contents, he wanted to ascertain for himself the arrangements of the figures and to help other faithful followers of the tradition to arrange such compositions correctly when commissioning similar sets.

According to Lowo Khenchen, the complete set consisted of eleven paintings, whose main figures were the successive gurus of the main Path with the Fruit lineage:<sup>377</sup>

1. Vajradhara (rDo rje ‘chang), with standing Vajragarbha (rDo rje snying po) and Nairātmyā (bDag med ma) to his right and left.

2. Virūpa (Birwa pa) and Kṛṣṇapāda (Nag po pa)
3. Ḍamarūpa and Avadhūtipa
4. Gayadhara and Drokmi Lotsawa (‘Brog mi Lo tsā ba, 992?–1072?)
5. Setön Kunrik (Se ston Kun rig) and Shangtön Chöbar (Zhang ston Chos ‘bar)
6. Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sa chen Kun dga’ snying po, 1092–1158), with standing Maitreya and Mañjuśrī to his right and left
7. Lobpön Sönam Tsemo (Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo, 1142–1182) and Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen (rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1147–1216)
8. Sakya Pandita (1182–1251) and Chögyal Phakpa (Chos rgyal ‘Phags pa, 1235–1280)
9. Shangtön (Zhang ston, b. 1240) and Chöje Drakphukpa (Chos rje Brag phug pa, 1277–1352)
10. Lotrö Tenpa (Blo gros brtan pa, 1316–1358) and Palden Tshultrim (dPal ldan tshul khriṃs, 1333–1399)
11. Buddhāshī with standing Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya to his right and left.

Figure 8.4 is the first of this set, and it would be difficult to understand without Lowo Khenchen’s help. As he described it:

The first [painting has as its main figure], the Victor (Buddha) Vajradhara, surrounded by a group of deities who are complete regarding the three “seats” [or classes of deities], according to the Yoga [Tantra system]. Above and diagonally out from his right and left shoulders are two figures of the Dharma lord Yeshe Gyaltsen (Ye shes rgyal mtshan), symbolizing learning and reflection (*thos bsam*) and meditative practice (*sgom sgrub*). Of these, the first [the one to the left] holds above his right shoulder a lotus flower with a book



on top, the stem of which emerges from between the figures' hands, which are in a gesture of teaching. The second figure folds his hands [in his lap] in the gesture of meditative concentration.

To the right and left of Vajradhara stand two figures: Vajragarbha (rDo rje snying po) and Nairātmyā (bDag med ma). Vajragarbha holds his right hand to his heart in a gesture of teaching Dharma, and he holds between his thumb and finger the stem of an *utpala* water lily, upon which rests a vajra. His left hand is extended in the gesture of highest giving, and between his thumb and finger he holds [the stem of] an *utpala* flower, upon which rests a bell.

The [goddess] Nairātmyā holds upward a curved knife in her outstretched right hand, and in her left hand she holds a skull cup, in the manner of offering the nectar [to the main figure, Vajradhara].

Thus the Tibetan lama depicted twice (gu1 and gu2 in diagram [B]) was Ngorchén's late guru Sharchen, shown in two different aspects as religious master. (He did not give Ngorchén the Path with the Fruit instructions, but Ngorchén still recalled his spiritual inspiration with great gratitude here, at the beginning of the *thangka* series.) To the above description, Lowo Khenchen adds:

In paintings two through five, the four pairs of main figures sit facing each other. The upper row and right and left vertical columns of these four paintings are taken up by twenty-one great adepts each, i.e., by eighty-four great adepts in all.

The thirty-four minor figures of this *thangka* include, according to Lowo Khenchen, the groups of mandala deities who together constitute the three main

seats (*gdan*) or types of deities according to the Yogatantras. The three are: type 1, the five buddhas and eight bodhisattvas; type 2, the five female buddha consorts (*rig ma*) and eight goddesses; and type 3, male and female wrathful deities. In this painting one can see the five buddhas of the mandala on the top row, the second through sixth figures (d1–d5). Next to them are the bodhisattvas, and below them, the buddha consorts and goddesses. The third seat or type is represented by the ten wrathful deities (d19–d28).

Note the presence of a three-jewel motif at the top of the backrest arch, instead of a *garuda*. Otherwise five of the backrest animals are present in the arch behind the main figure.

Figure 8.5 shows a painting from the same set as Figure 8.4, this one portraying the great adepts Virūpa and Kṛṣṇapa as main figures. In this set the central gurus appear in successive pairs, except for the paintings of Vajradhara and Sachen, which have single main figures. (Such pairing of masters facing each other is merely a convention of placement and does not show them in conversation, as many have speculated.) The minor figures surrounding them are some of the eighty-four great adepts. The present painting depicts the second painting of this main commission of Ngorchén.

Lowo Khenchen also provides other important details:

[Painting number 2]

And in the middle, above the “ornamental [golden] crest” (*rgya phibs*) of the second painting stands the lord Hevajra on a stacked seat [of reclining deities]. To his right is the Nairātmyā of the *Samputa* [Tantra], whose first right hand brandishes a vajra and whose [first] left hand holds a skull cup to her heart. The lower two hands hold [respectively] a curved knife

and skull cup [correct to: “arrow”—it is not a skull cup]. She stands in a dancing posture in which her feet are “half folded” and the left foot is extended. To [Hevajra's] left is Nairātmyā as taught in the [Hevajra] *Mūlatantra*.

This painting can be diagrammed as shown in [C]. According to Lowo Khenchen, in this *thangka* near the bottom of the right column (which is, from the viewer's perspective, on the left) is pictured one of the four main forms of Hevajra according to the *Vajra Pañjara Tantra*. That deity is d4, and beneath him is his own special group of eight goddesses, namely those of the class called Possessing Vajras (*rdo rje can*), who are goddesses g1 through g8.

Ngorchén has ordered the great adepts depicted following the traditional order of Vajrāsana. As R. Linrothe established, adepts number ga1 through ga21 depict the adepts Nāgārjuna through Kantipa or Shantipa.<sup>378</sup> The great adepts number 7 and 8 in Vajrāsana's list have changed positions, with ga7, Virupa, moving ahead of ga8, Dombi Heruka. Virupa thus appears twice in the painting: as the first main guru of the series (number 4) and as seventh of eighty-four adepts.

The arrangement of the horizontal and vertical borders with eight and nine roundels holding minor deities creates a nearly square painting surface. The circles of scrollwork in the dark black background have been built up from repeated flower motifs, four in each loop. In the red backrest behind the main figures, the circles of scrollwork are built up differently, from three distinct spirals per circle. As R. Linrothe noted:<sup>379</sup> “Paintings from this set are characterized by dazzling embellishments that, like the lotus petals on the main figures' daises, rightly clamor for attention. The duotone textile patterns on the large and smaller figures are also notable.” We





FIG. 8.5  
Virūpa and Kṛṣṇapa  
1429–1456  
34 x 31 ½ in. (86.4 x 80 cm)  
The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H.  
Kinney  
Literature: R. Linrothe ed. 2006, no. 49.

should also note the absence of a *garuda* again at the top of the two main backrest arches; instead we have once more three-jewel motifs. (See Fig. 8.5a.) The elaborate scrolling tails issue from the tails of *shangs shangs* bird-men.

Several paintings from the set of mandalas of the Vajrāvalī cycle that Ngorchen commissioned in memory of his deceased teacher Sazang Phakpa Shönnu Lodrö also survive (for instance, Fig. 8.6). Like the previous paintings, they were evidently taken from Ngor during the chaotic unrest of the early 1960s—when many temples of Ngor were left unprotected—and were transported via Nepal or India to the West, where they were sold in the mid- or late 1960s. Their original provenance was clarified only thirty years later.<sup>380</sup>

The later abbot and historian of Ngor, Sanggye Phüntshok, greatly admired this wonderful set of painted mandalas, and he marveled at the remarkable circumstances under which the artists came from the Kathmandu Valley to paint them. Six Newar painters, including Wang gu li and his brother, are said to have come to the Ngor retreat without prior arrangement, showing up one day unannounced soon after Ngorchen had decided to have a set of the Vajrāvalī mandalas painted.

One of these Newar painters, A khe ra dza by name, later said that all of them without discussing the matter had suddenly decided to come to Tibet to the “son of lama Phakpa” (i.e., to the presence of Ngorchen, the great disciple of Sazang Phakpa Shönnu Lodrö). Along the way they were given plenty of good offers to paint at such places in western Tsang as Latö Shelkar (La stod Shel dkar), Chudü (Chu ‘dus), and Sakya (all of which were located much closer to Nepal than Ngor). They had even been told by one man that they would be paid in gold if they came with him and worked at Entshakha (En tsha kha, a famous Bönpo center in Tsang). Even so,

[C]

ga1	ga2	ga3	ga4		ga5	ga6	ga7	ga8
ga9								ga10
ga11		d2		d1			d3	ga12
ga13								ga14
ga15								ga16
ga17			4		5			ga18
ga19								ga20
d4								ga21
g1	g2	g3	g4		g5	g6	g7	g8





FIG. 8.5A  
Detail from Fig. 8.5

none of them wanted to work at those places; they were drawn to the remote hermitage of Ngor in central Tsang, “as if summoned there by the power of the lama Kunga Zangpo’s meditation.” Later lamas of Ngor interpreted this to mean that they had been summoned to Ngor against their will by the Dharmapāla protective deities.<sup>381</sup>

Among the Sakya lamas of his generation, Ngorchen was one of the chief students of Sazang Phakpa (Sa bzang ‘Phags pa), who had traveled to Nepal. This made his links with Nepal and the Newars more expectable, especially when commissioning mandalas for the Vajrāvalī cycle of tantric teachings, which he had received from Sazang Phakpa. This set is an important exam-

ple of Newar religious pictorial art created by Newar artists in Tibet for a discerning Tibetan patron. The set presumably served later as a peerless iconographic example when later abbots commissioned sets of Vajrāvalī mandalas.

The workmanship of Figure 8.6 and other mandalas of this set is exquisite. It exemplifies to perfection several of the main vegetal scrolling patterns of Newar painting of this period. The incredibly complex iconography has been executed with equal care and exactitude. The small figures each have tiny gold inscriptions, which identify them as the sixteen bodhisattvas (*kun rig byang sems*) and *śrāvaka* (*kun rig nyan thos*) of the complicated Sarvavid mandala.

Figure 8.7 portrays a mandala of Red Yamari with a lineage of teachers. Though it is not a commission of Ngorchen, it can be linked with one of

his outstanding disciples. It is roughly datable thanks to its inscription and inscribed lineage. The lineage, shown in diagram [D], begins on the far left and continues with eighteen masters along the top line, about the maximum number that would fit.

The painting can be confidently attributed to religious art commissioned by the circle of Ngorchen’s main early disciples. We can identify its patron thanks to a colophon-like inscription on its back, which was probably added by one of the disciples of the patron, judging by its respectful turns of phrase. It records: “This was commissioned as an object for his personal practice (*thugs dam*) by Changphukpa (Byang phug pa) Lama Kunga Lekpa (Kun dga’ legs pa).”<sup>382</sup> Oddly enough, Kunga Lekpa seems to occur both as number 18, the final guru in the lineage, and below as the patron: *yon bdag kun dga’ legs pa*. The last five guru names to be listed are:

14. Sazang Panchen (Sa bzang Pan chen)
15. Sazang Phakpa (Sa bzang ‘Phags pa)
16. Önchen Sanggye (dBon chen Sangs rgyas)
17. Tashi ... (bKra shis—)
18. Kunga Lekpa (Kun dga’ legs pa)

Changphukpa Kunga Lekpa thus also had received teachings transmitted by the lamas of Sazang. He certainly was one of the most respected teachers of tantra in his generation. In about 1419, he received the longest and most detailed version of the Path with the Fruit instructions that Ngorchen ever gave, when Ngorchen visited Tingkye (gTing skyes) and Changphuk in southern Tsang. Sixteen years later, Changphukpa took part in Kunga Wangchuk’s monastic ordination at the Sharpa lama palace in Sakya, which Ngorchen led. After that, Kunga Wangchuk studied the three Hevajra tantras under Kunga Lekpa at Changphuk (Byang phug), or the





FIG. 8.6  
Mandala from the Vajrāvali Cycle Commissioned by Ngorchen in Memory of Sazang Phakpa  
1429–1456  
32 ¼ x 29 in. (81.92 x 73.66 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2007.6.1 (HAR 81826)





FIG. 8.7  
Mandala of Red Yamari with Lineal Gurus  
Ca. 1415–1435  
35 x 30 ¼ in. (88.90 x 76.84 cm)  
Collection of Shelley and Donald Rubin  
P2001.18.3 (HAR 1041)

[D]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
-----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----



Northern Cave, which I presume was located south of Ngor in the vicinity of Tingkye.

Thus, Kunga Lekpa of Changphuk was one of the most esteemed early advanced disciples of Ngorchen. By the mid-1430s his mastery of tantra was so highly regarded that the paramount expert of tantra, Ngorchen himself, entrusted him with training in tantric exegesis his nephew Kunga Wangchuk (who later became fourth abbot of Ngor). I accordingly date the mandala paintings that he commissioned to about 1415 to 1435. He certainly flourished during that period, though he may have lived even longer.

### PAINTINGS COMMISSIONED BY NGOR ABBOTS

Thus we should not indiscriminately call all Beri thangkas dating to about the fifteenth century “Ngor paintings,” since similar paintings were commissioned elsewhere in Tsang and Tibet by masters of the Sakya School and even by numerous patrons of other religious traditions. Still, if one closely examines the accessible Beri paintings that date to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many can be seen to contain inscriptions linking them specifically to Ngor, either as works commissioned by lamas of that monastery or as embodying traditions closely linked with it. Special later variations of this style continued to be employed by patrons of Ngor as late as the second half of the sixteenth century. If any thangkas should be classified as “Beri style of Ngor,” these latest ones probably should.

In the following pages, I present several more paintings in the Beri style that can be linked with Ngor.<sup>383</sup> For ease of description, I have divided the Beri periods at Ngor into five subperiods, covering its first fourteen abbots: 1) Ngorchen’s time at Ngor, 1429–1456; 2) the time of the second through sixth



FIG. 8.8  
Ngorchen with His Sakya Lineage  
Ca. 1440s–1470s  
46½ x 40 ½ in. (118.11 x 102.87 cm)  
Collection of Shelley and Donald Rubin  
P1994.21.5 (HAR 134)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 84.

[E]									
1	2	3	4	(B)	5	6	8	b1	
	9	d1				d2	10		
				11					
	12						13		





FIG. 8.8A  
Detail from Fig. 8.8

abbot, 1456–1486; 3) the abbacies of the seventh through ninth abbot, 1486–1534; 4) the abbacies of the tenth and eleventh abbots, 1534–1569; and 5) the abbacies of the twelfth through fourteenth abbot, 1569–1603. Since I have already touched on Ngorchen's period earlier in the chapter, we can begin here with paintings commissioned by his earliest successors.

### *Abbacies of the Second through Sixth Abbot*

The second through sixth abbots of Ngor led the monastery for three decades, from the mid-1450s through the mid-1480s. These masters were:

2. Müchen Sempa Chenpo Könchok Gyaltsen (Mus chen Sems dpa' chen po dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, 1388–1469), tenure 1456–ca. 1461

3. Gartön Jamyang Sherab Gyatsho ('Gar ston 'Jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho, ca. 1396–ca. 1474), tenure ca. 1461–ca. 1465
4. Gyaltsab Kunga Wangchuk (rGyal tshab Kun dga' dbang phyug, 1424–1478), tenure 1465–1478
5. Palden Dorje (dPal ldan rdo rje, 1411–1482), tenure ca. 1479–1482
6. Gowo Rabjampa Sönam Sengge (Go bo rab 'byams pa bSod nams seng ge, 1429–1489), tenure 1483–1486

During this period, the greatest patrons of Ngor included the lords of Rinpung (Norbu Zangpo and his sons) and the Lo king Amgön Zangpo with his son Tashi Göñ. There were many others.

Although lacking inscriptions, Figure 8.8 seems to portray Ngorchen surrounded by his Sakya lineage. This painting, if it does portray Ngorchen, is one of the grandest surviving portraits of the master. It cannot yet be precisely dated, though I hypothesize that it dates to the time of Ngorchen or his first few abbatial successors.

The first row begins like the first seven gurus of the Sakya Profound Path (*Lam zab*) lineage, as shown in diagram [E]. The Buddha in the center of the top row (B) does not belong to the lineage, and he is further set apart from it visually through his smaller proportions. The inclusion of number b1, the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, in the same proportions as the others is unexpected. Could he represent Chögyal Phakpa's younger brother, Chakna, whose full name, Chakna Dorje (Phyag na rdo rje), was Tibetan for Vajrapāṇi?

The lineage seems to pause after Chögyal Phakpa, number 8 in the top row. The two yellow-hatted masters shown to larger proportions to the right and left of Ngorchen's head (gurus 9 and 10) may depict two of his gurus, perhaps Sharchen and Sazang Phakpa or Sharchen and Buddhashrī. Similar yellow-hatted gurus appear prominently among the last lineal gurus in another early portrait of Ngorchen, Figure 8.2, as fourth and fifth gurus in the second to last horizontal row, but there they turn out to depict the main figure, Ngorchen, a second and third time.<sup>384</sup> The two yellow-hatted masters pictured here in Figure 8.8 presumably gave him specific initiations or teachings of Cakrasamvara and Hevajra (d1 and d2), and each master is accompanied by one of these tutelary deities. (That form of Hevajra is not that of the Path with the Fruit cycle.) If the two yellow-hatted masters are his gurus, the last two minor lamas wearing red hats beneath them (gurus 12 and 13) may be two of his earliest disciples and successors.

The portrait of Ngorchen resembles in many important respects the two portraits described above as Figures 8.2 and 8.3. Here Ngorchen gazes to the left, his face shown in partial profile. His nose seems to have more of a bend in it than in Figure 8.2. He smiles mildly and holds his hands to his chest in the gesture of teaching. He wears the same red



pundit's hat of Sakya lamas, whose pointed ear flaps hang down over his shoulders. These flaps hang down below his chin a little less than the length of his face and are only about two or three finger widths wide. The hat's top or crown is slightly pointed, here covering about twice as much of the crown of his head as the thickness of the flaps. Its inner edge is trimmed with a thin strip of blue that extends to the bottom of the flaps, probably depicting a blue brocade since it is decorated with tiny golden crosses. The hat is identical to that worn by Sakya Pandita, who appears as a minor figure in the painting once above (guru number 6), except that Sakya Pandita's red hat has a strip of yellow lining.

As his second upper garment, Ngorchen here wears over his lama's vest only the special upper robe of a fully ordained monk (Tib. *snam sbyar*), made of many small pieces sewn together as in Figure 8.2. It hangs down over his knees but does not cover his feet. (No second outer lama's robe covers his shoulders or knees.)

This portrait of Ngorchen and his lineage is not in a true Beri style. It includes, for instance, a green landscape in the background. It thus seems to be a very early example of one of the new non-Beri Tibetan styles such as the Menri that were established in the mid-fifteenth century. Note also the stylized puffy pink seven-lobed clouds behind the heads of minor figures, which likewise were not originally employed in the Beri style, though similar clouds can be found behind some peaceful deities in the Gyantse stupa murals (Fig. 7.15). Compare also the two minor figures in Figure 8.18 with lobed pink clouds behind them, but there the clouds are less stylized.

The tiny decorative designs in the head nimbus behind Ngorchen's head are not Newar scrollwork but rather stylized lotuses as depicted in brocade designs (*gos chen ri mo*). The brocade

designs on his upper monks robe are depicted with finesse. The most prominent Beri feature remaining in the painting is the trefoil bejeweled golden arch above the central figure, supported by ornate pillars and backed by a red backdrop full of faint decorative scrollwork (probably painted with lac dye). The ornate pillars of the arch rest on the prescribed vase, and its second segment culminates in a lotus capital and bracket, upon which rests a flaming jewel. Meanwhile the structurally simple upper arch of the backrest and body and head nimbuses of the main figure are richly ornamented with a border of jewels set in gold. Roundels of golden vegetal scrolling complete the blue back cushion, green head nimbus and red background beneath the arch of the central figure's backrest (*rgyab yol*, lit. "back-curtain") or backrest design (*rgyab yol gyi bkod pa*). The backrests of the other figures are comparatively simple.

Figure 8.9 was mentioned above as Figure 2.12 as an example of a rare lineal structure. It depicts the monastic ordination lineage of Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo, which was a subject of great importance for him and his ordained followers. Since it includes his successor Mūchen as a second main figure, it apparently dates to either late in Ngorchen's lifetime or soon after his passing, and thus is a significant painting from this period.

Its structure, shown in diagram [F], is unusual for depicting Ngorchen three times (18a, 18b, and 18c). The inscriptions indicate that in his first appearance (18a) he is a master of great learning and reflection (*thos bsam pa chen po*), while in the second (18b) he is Kunga Zangpo, the great meditator (*bsam gtan pa chen po kun dga' bzang po*), and in the third (18c) may be Ngorchen as master of monastic discipline. The lineage of this tradition has been illustrated in part above, in the portrait of Khenchen Tashi Tshultrim (Fig. 7.5). It is recorded prominently by Ngorchen near the be-

ginning of his record of teachings received.<sup>385</sup>

The painting portrays Ngorchen and Mūchen as young and vital monastic teachers. They are in about their mid-thirties or forties, and both have full heads of black hair. Their faces are very similar. They wear beautiful robes, trimmed in gold brocade designs (including mantra seed syllables written in *lañcana* script, the Indian script that was popular in Nepal). They are portrayed sitting in a richly decorated setting. The sense of sumptuous wealth is increased by the portrayal of three-jewel clusters at the tip of each lama's backrest arch, again with no *garuda*, and the ornate golden strips that form the body and head nimbuses. For variety, evidently, the artist depicted both two- and three-segmented pillars supporting the backrest arch, and he painted a green flaming jewel at the top of each pillar, where the *makaras* formerly held sway. In addition to the thickly applied gold of the backrest arches and head and body aureoles, the painter has applied golden outlining or thinner details in many other places, even as eight golden auspicious symbols float faintly in the dark blue skylike field above and behind the backrest arch.

Figure 8.10 depicts the great masters Ngorchen and Mūchen again as principal figures. Very youthful in appearance, the main figures would seem to be numbers 23 and 24 in the lineage, assuming that the painting depicts a complete lineage of the bodhisattva vows of the Madhyamaka tradition (*dBu ma lugs kyi sems bskyed*) and that the lineage ends with them. The main figures have been previously identified as Ngorchen and Mūchen, who one would have expected to appear as numbers 22 and 23 in this lineage, the last two minor figures.

The structure of the painting is shown in diagram [G]. Although three extraneous Indian pundits (10b, 10c, and 10d) and a second Bari Lotsawa (11b)



may be present, after number 15, Sakya Pandita (1182–1251), the generations of gurus correspond exactly with the written records of the lineage for the bodhisattva vows, making it possible to estimate a dating to about the 1450s to 1470s.

Note the presence of single flaming jewels at the top of each backrest arch of the main figures and similar jewels at the head of each pillar, from which the ornate golden tails issue, instead of a mythical animal.

### Abbacies of the Seventh through Ninth Abbot

The next subperiod at Ngor covers roughly five decades, from the mid-1480s until the early 1530s, the abbacies of the seventh through ninth abbot:

7. Yongdzin Könchok Phel (Yongs ‘dzin dKon mchog ‘phel, 1445–1514), tenure 1486–1513
8. Müchen Sanggye Rinchen (Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen, circa 1453–1524), tenure 1513–1516
9. Gyalwa Lhachok Sengge (rGyal ba Lha mchog seng ge, 1468–1535), tenure 1516–1534

During the abbacies of the first two, the Rinpung lords established themselves as rulers of both Ü and Tsang Provinces. This was the high point of their power. The second among these abbots, Sanggye Rinchen, before serving at Ngor went to Ü and was appointed abbot of Nalendra. Early in the abbacy of the third in this group—Lhachok Sengge—the Rinpung lords, after a military debacle in Ü Province, retreated to Tsang, where they entrenched themselves again and maintained a smaller paramouncy.

Figure 8.11 depicts the abbots Kunga Wangchuk and Gorampa surrounded by a long lineage. Presumably commissioned by one of their disciples,



FIG. 8.9 (also discussed as Fig. 2.12)  
Ngorchen and Müchen with Their  
Ordination Lineage  
Mid-15th century  
34 ½ x 31 ½ in. (87.6 x 80 cm)  
Stephen and Sharon Davies Collection  
Literature: P. Pal 1991, no. 87, p. 155.

[F]								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
								9
		18a		17			18b	10
								11
			18c		19			12
								13
								14
								15
								16





FIG. 8.10  
Ngorchen and Mûchen with Lineage  
Ca. 1450s–1470s  
26 x 23 in. (66 x 58.4 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.153 (HAR 128)

[G]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	11a		10c?	10d?		11b	10a
	10b?							12
	13							14
	15	23?				24?		16
	17							18
	19							20
	21							22
								Patron?

FIG. 8.11  
The Ngor Abbots Gyaltsab Kunga  
Wangchuk and Gorampa Sönam Sengge,  
with their Path with the Fruit or Hevajra  
Lineage  
Last quarter of the 15th century  
53 x 46 in. (134.6 x 116.8 cm)  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art. From  
the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collec-  
tion. Purchased with Funds Provided by the  
Jane and Justin Dart Foundation. M.81.90.1  
Literature: P. Pal 1983, P13 (plate 18); and  
G. Béguin et al. 1977, no. 110.

the painting thus dates to the beginning of this period. It is structurally complicated, demonstrating the need to check for possible splits in the lineages.<sup>386</sup>

P. Pal in his Los Angeles County Museum catalog of 1983 described this painting as depicting a Sakyapa lineage from central Tibet (Ngor Monastery), and he dated it to between 1475 and 1500.<sup>387</sup> H. E. Richardson in an appendix in Pal's catalog (p. 260) presents the inscriptions that make it possible to identify the painting as belonging to the Ngorpa tradition, though Richardson did not see the connection.

The two main figures are Gyaltsab Kunga Wangchuk (1424–1478), nephew of Ngorchen and fourth abbot of Ngor (tenure 1465–1478), and Gorampa Sönam Sengge (1429–1489), sixth abbot (tenure 1483–1486). This painting was probably commissioned in the late fifteenth century by a student of these two masters, such as Könchok Phel (abbot 1486–1513). The previous dating from approximately 1475 to 1500 is thus accurate.

The smaller figures portray a Path with the Fruit or Hevajra lineage of Sakya and Ngor. The lineage begins from the top-left corner and proceeds right until the end of the first row, but the slightly larger figures of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo and his sons Sönam Tsemo and Drakpa Gyaltshe (numbers 11, 12, and 13) are positioned in the sec-







[H]										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	14	<b>12</b>	21a	22a	<b>11</b>	21b	22b	<b>13</b>	15a	
	15b									16a
	16b									17a
	17b		<b>24</b>				<b>27</b>			18a
	18b									20
	19									23
	25									26

ond row according to a different convention: center, second from the left, and second from the right. Then the lineage forks: the main line goes from Sakya Pandita to Chögyal Phakpa and hence to Palden Tshultrim (dPal ldan tshul khrim), while another passes down from Sakya Pandita to his disciple Nyenchenpa (Nyan chen pa) and from him to Palden Tshultrim, the teacher of Buddhashrī in the Path with the Fruit lineage. (See diagram [H]).

Ngorchon received the transmission from Buddhashrī. He and his student Mūchen each appear twice in the second row, once above the heads of each of the two central figures. Above his nephew, Ngorchon looks considerably younger, while above Gorampa, he appears decidedly older. The artist has thus correctly depicted the lama’s age in each case. Perhaps he did so at the urging of the patron, who, if the painting was made just twenty or thirty years after Ngorchon’s passing, might have still remembered how the venerable masters looked. (See also Fig. 1.24).

The work is a technical tour de force, and one discovers, wherever one looks, a wealth of excellently executed decorative detail. For instance, the traditional pillars that stand to the right and left of the main figures (and between them), supporting the ornate bejeweled golden arch above, are masterful. As decreed by convention, each pillar stands upon and indeed grows from a vase. Though hardly recognizable as such, the

central segments of the pillars are actually stylized flower stalks and blooms. (Such a magical vase also appears at the bottom middle of this and many other Beri paintings, as the symbolic aquatic source of long, convoluted vine roundels, which also originated as lotus stems.)

Each pillar is divided into two segments, which begin and end in lotus flowers. Where the two segments join, the artist has rendered the nexus like a vajra. To the right and left of each pillar grows a series of tiny shoots, buds, and blossoms. The topmost lotus of the second segment culminates as a flower capital, upon which rests a bracket, a simpler red lotus, and finally a flaming green jewel, with stylized golden flames almost baroque in their extravagance. Each flourish evokes yet more awe.

In many paintings, the spaces between vine roundels are left relatively empty. But no space is wasted here. A glance below the main figures reveals another vajra-like floral nexus used to

fill one gap above the central vase. To the right and left are more surprises: eight carefully rendered series of auspicious emblems placed between the roundels that establish the places of the two lower rows of deities.

Note the rich ornamentation of the upper arch and body and head nimbuses of the main figures with a border of jewels set in ornate golden bezels (as in Fig. 8.8). Once again, jewels blaze at the top of the main pillars, instead of the mythical animals. The golden flames engulfing those jewels are shown in a special stylized way again (cf. Figs. 8.8, 8.9, and 8.10). Here that complicated motif has been employed repeatedly in the upper edge of the principal figures’ backrest arches.

The artistry is so excellent that I at first suspected that the painting was commissioned by one of the main patrons of the second main figure, Gorampa, perhaps by the rich and powerful Rinjungpa lords who sponsored his founding of his monastic seat, Tanak Thubten (rTa nag Thub bstan). Those lords were the wealthiest and most influential patrons in central Tsang in the final quarter of the fifteenth century. But on second thought, given the painting’s iconographic finesse, it seemed to me just as likely that the painting could have been commissioned by a prominent abbot of the period such as Könchok Phel, who had been the disciple of both main lamas pictured.

[I]												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				
	9	19	g?			g?	20	10				
	11							12				
	13							14				
	15							16–17				
	18							21				
	22							23				
	24							25				
	26							26				
	P	*d*	28	29	30	31	32	33				



Figure 8.12 depicts with a burst of mystical energy the tantric deity Cakrasamvara. He is shown following Luipa's tradition and surrounded by lineal gurus of the Sakya School, each carefully depicted beneath his own Beri-style arch. I briefly noted this thangka as an example of a certain lineage structure in Figure 2.13. The entire lineage of the painting can be depicted as shown in diagram [I]. (For another example of this lineage, see Fig. 7.29.)

The planner of this thangka took two key gurus in the transmission, numbers 19 and 20 (Mal Lotsawa and Sachen), out of order and lifted them to a higher position, to pay special respect. (Two small figures of lamas are depicted above their shoulders, whom I did not count as main gurus of the lineage.) Number 31, who alone is shown wearing the red pundit's hat, is most likely Ngorchén, and number 32 is his successor Mûchen, who was a noted yogi in the traditions of Cakrasamvara. The patron who is pictured in the bottom-left corner most likely was a disciple of the thirty-third guru in the lineage, who flourished from about the 1460s to the 1480s.

Rhie and Thurman noted many excellent features of this painting, including:<sup>388</sup>

A flame halo with a background of red on red is rimmed by large flames shaded vividly with orange, pink and yellow, each flicker outlined in dark red. The pedestal has an orange surface that represents the solar disc of spiritual energy. Delicately shimmering transparent planes and lines of yellow, light blue, orange and lavender form the intricately detailed lotus and pedestal base. A border with rose red with gold-lined flowers completes this tanka.

Note the presence of one- and three-



jewel motifs in the backrest arches of the lesser figures.

Figure 8.13 depicts the Tibetan master who transmitted the key Path with the Fruit instructions to Ngorchén. The main figure sits in partial profile, smiling warmly to the left. The two larger of the minor figures, to the right and left of his head nimbus, seem to be two of his main teachers.

Besides the lineal lamas, the painting features two images of Buddha Amitâyus, presumably embodying prayers of the patron for the long life of the then still-living gurus of the lineage. The little Amitâyus on the left has been

FIG. 8.12 (also discussed as Fig. 2.13)  
Cakrasamvara in Luipa's Tradition with a Sakya Lineage  
Late 15th century  
24 x 18 in. (61 x 45.8 cm)  
Private Collection  
Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991, p. 221, no. 70.







FIG. 8.13

Lama Buddhashrī with the Yogācāra Lineage  
of Bodhisattva Vow

Ca. 1515–1535

36 x 23 in. (91.44 x 58.42 cm)

Rubin Museum of Art

C2006.66.220 (HAR 269)

Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 87.

pushed down, somewhat inelegantly, in the composition to accommodate two more gurus on that side. The patron of the painting appears in the bottom row, the second figure from the left, humbly supplicating the main figure. According to an inscription, Lhachok Sengge (ninth abbot of Ngor) commissioned the painting.

Though commissioned by an abbot of Ngor, the painting is not painted in a style with many Beri features. The only features I could find are its linear arrangement of the minor figures and its plain, simply decorated dark blue background. The thangka has no green landscape. The backrest of the main figure is draped with an orange cloth, which seems to hang on both sides over the ornate wooden tips of an otherwise hidden low Chinese-style throne, though they may be the ends of a traditional backrest lintel, placed lower than normal. Each of the several large, dark blue, green, or red lotus leaves that support his seat have been decorated with individual golden lotus flowers, evidently copied from Chinese brocade patterns. The head nimbus of the main figure and a small part of his upper body nimbus (see detail) are richly ornamented with a border of jewels set in gold.

The Indian masters of the lineage are not painted uniformly: some are bare headed and others wear pundit hats. The color of those hats alternates red and yellow, as in Figure 8.21.

This painting possibly portrays Buddhashrī in his role as lineal master of



FIG. 8.13A

Detail from Fig. 8.13

the Path with the Fruit instructions of Ngor. He is shown wearing typical Tibetan monastic garb, including a monk's vest (which Indian monks never wore), so his being an Indian pundit is iconographically impossible.<sup>389</sup> Some histories mention an Indian pundit named Buddhashrī, but he played no known role in any later Tibetan school.<sup>390</sup>

Figure 8.14 shows a statue of the great abbot Lhachok Sengge. He sits with one hand in a gesture of teaching and the other holding a glowing jewel. He wears the robes of a fully ordained monk and is seated on a somewhat modest plain double-mat seat.

The statue is made of a rare material, ivory. The iconography of the lama's ceremonial hat, with long ear flaps folded flat and hanging straight down the back, is also unusual. Later a related adaptation of the Sakya pundit's

hat (*pan zhu*) was devised for the ceremonial hats of the head lamas (*bdag chen*) of Sakya and Ngor abbots (I am not sure who began it), which has in the meanwhile become the official hat type among all Sakyapa lamas of all subjects. But that later hat had the flaps folded together in the front and formed into a crest that ran from front to back across its crown.<sup>391</sup> (According to oral tradition, the hats of lay lamas differ slightly from hats worn by lamas ordained as monks.)

Another painting commissioned by the same abbot, Lhachok Sengge, is Figure 8.15, which portrays a mandala of Vajrabhairava in solitary form. According to its brief colophon-like







FIG. 8.14  
 Lhachok Sengge  
 Ca. 16th century  
 Ivory; 5 ½ x 3 ½ x 2 ¼ in. (14 x 8.8 x 5.7 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2003.23.2 (HAR 65232)

inscription, the fully ordained monk and Vajrayana practitioner Lhachok Sengge commissioned this assembly of mandala deities for his personal practice.<sup>392</sup> He is portrayed below to the left as the patron (P). The lineal gurus are arranged around the central mandala as shown in diagram [I] (larger figures are shown in bold). On the top edge of the back side of the mount are two inscriptions, one of which identifies the main subject of the thangka as Vajrabhairava.<sup>393</sup>

The workmanship of the painting is fine, as would befit an abbatial commission of that time. Even the smallest of lineal gurus or minor deities in the top and bottom rows are placed within a series of laboriously rendered arched openings, while the more prominently depicted masters sit within independent trilobate arches. Note the presence of white stupas (not jewels) at the head of each tiny pillar. Every empty space is filled with refined Newar scrollwork, some monochrome (e.g., indigo on blue) and some with added highlights of white or gold.

Figure 8.16 depicts a mandala of Cakrasamvara, here with a lineage that looks suspiciously incomplete at its end. Like Figure 8.15 it was commissioned by Lhachok Sengge, but he commissioned this thangka and other paintings in the same set for the longevity of his guru, Könchok Phel, as is stated in a colophon-like inscription at the bottom.<sup>394</sup> Though commissioned in the early sixteenth century, the painting preserves the ancient Indian starting position in its lineage, placing Vajradhara in the top-left corner. If the larger figures (shown in bold) follow the sequence of



FIG. 8.15  
 Mandala of Vajrabhairava in Solitary Form  
 1515–1535  
 20 x 17 ⅛ in. (50.8 x 43.4 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2005.16.40 (HAR 65463)

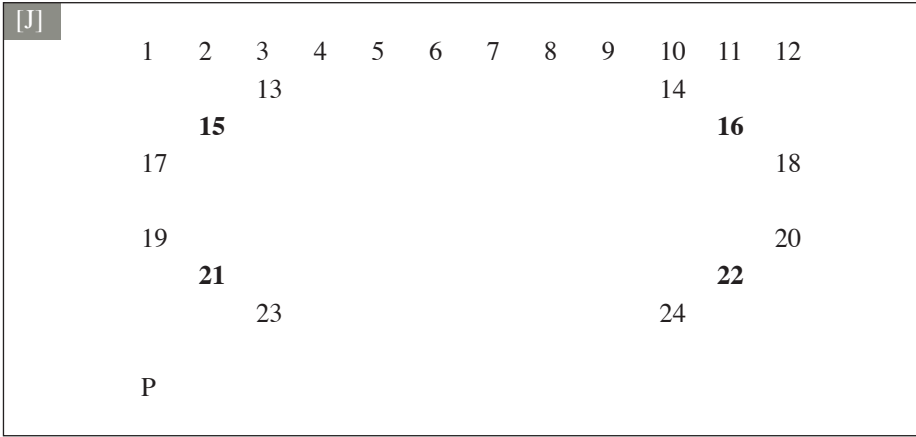






FIG. 8.16  
Cakrasamvara Mandala with Incomplete  
Lineage  
1505–1514  
21 ½ x 17 ½ in. (54.6 x 44.5 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2001.9.1 (HAR 65020)  
Literature: R. Linrothe and J. Watt eds.  
2004, catalog no. 43; and D. Leidy and R.  
Thurman 1997, no. 25.

[K]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		12						13		
	14							15		
16									17	
18										19
	20							21		
		22						23		



the smaller ones, the ordering of these lineal gurus around the central mandala would be as shown in diagram [K]. Since this lineage begins with many Indian adepts, twenty-three gurus are not enough to bring the lineage down to the time of its patron. (The absence of a patron may also be a clue that the lineage is incomplete.)

This painting retains many traditional decorative elements of the Beri, including the row of ornate niches within which the top and bottom rows of eleven gurus and deities are seated. The artist has painted each minor figure in an animated way, with individual visages. He has also rendered with miniaturist exactitude the supporting vase and other tiny details that make up each supporting pillar but here rendering a white stupa at the top of each pillar (as in Fig. 8.15). In the inner corners where the last twelve gurus are pictured, the background is solid blue and filled with foliated scrollwork. White highlights enhance the decorative appeal of the repeated indigo whorls. The dark green outer edges of the mandala, too, are filled with the same “typical Ngor-style acanthus leaf” background.<sup>395</sup>

Figure 8.17 depicts in a lively way two Indian adepts: Damarūpa and Awadhutipa, portraying them as two early lineal gurus of the Path with the Fruit instructions. The main figures do not sit within a formal Beri arch or back-rest niche. The open arrangement of the columns of minor figures is also not of Newar inspiration. But the color scheme and some details are reminiscent of the Beri; a dark blue sky behind the red head nimbuses of the main figures is filled with Newar scrollwork. Note also the pairs of athletes and *shangs shangs* bird-men that lift the throne pedestals.

A careful examination of the minor figures turned up a few inscriptions near them. Though damaged, if I have deciphered them correctly, they indicate that



FIG. 8.17  
The Indian Adepts Damarūpa and  
Awadhutipa with a Lineage  
Ca. late 15th or 16th century  
24 x 20.75 in. (60.9 x 52.7 cm)  
Collection of Shelley and Donald Rubin  
P2000.5.2 (HAR 946)  
Literature: P. Pal et al. 2003, no. 175.

[L]									
8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9	
10									11
12									13 'phags ('Phags pa)
14									15
16									17 dpal ldan (dPal ldan tshul khriṃs?)
18									19 kun dga' bzod or kun dga' bzang [p]o?



the lineage ends about the time of Ngorchen. Three figures in the right column bear tiny black inscriptions on the right edge of the painting, arranged as shown in diagram [L]. The second name element of number 19 seemed at first sight to be *bzod*, but it is more likely to be *bzango*, as a contraction of the name Zangpo (*bzang po*). The small figure in the center between the two main figures is identified by an inscription as “Palchen Öpo” (Dpal chen ‘od po). Though the histories acknowledge an early lay master from the Sakya Khön (‘Khon) family by that name, he is rarely if ever enumerated or depicted among lineal gurus.

Despite its lineage, we should not automatically conclude that this painting is an example of a Beri painting of Kunga Zangpo’s time. Its style seems provincial and not typical of many Beri paintings from central Tsang in the mid-fifteenth century. Note the presence of stylized Chinese brocade motifs of clouds in the head nimbuses of the main figures. Is it thus a later, possibly sixteenth-century, painting copying an older structure or depicting an incomplete lineage? Or is it earlier, but painted in an unknown provincial style? Only an investigation of more thangkas from the same set will tell; however, none are known to me.

### Abbacies of the Tenth and Eleventh Abbots

The next subperiod of the Later Beri at Ngor covered roughly three and a half decades, beginning in the mid-1530s. That time saw the abbacies of two outstanding abbots, the tenth and eleventh: Könchok Lhündrup (dKon mchog lhun grub, 1497–1557), tenure from 1534 to 1557; and Sanggye Sengge (Sangs rgyas seng ge, 1504–1569), tenure from 1557 to 1569. These abbots brought great prestige to their monastic seat, and they

or their disciples commissioned some very sumptuous thangkas.<sup>396</sup> For much of this period, the Rinpung lords continued to govern most of Tsang Province from their capital, Rinpung.

Figure 8.18 portrays the Ngor abbot Sanggye Sengge (1504–1569) with a partial lineage. Though painted in basically a Menri style, and not the Beri, I include it here because it demonstrates that even when employed in a painting of a new style, the archaic Beri motifs add charm and, ironically enough, even freshness.

The thangka depicts its main figure, the eminent eleventh abbot of Ngor, as a vibrant young lama who wears a red ceremonial pundit hat. He is shown as an idealized teacher, holding one hand in the gesture of teaching and in the other a golden vase of immortality with a glowing orb above it. (Could the vase signify that he was still alive, with the patron symbolically praying for his longevity?) Certainly the vajra and bell on the lotuses next to his shoulders symbolize his extraordinary mastery of Vajrayana practice.

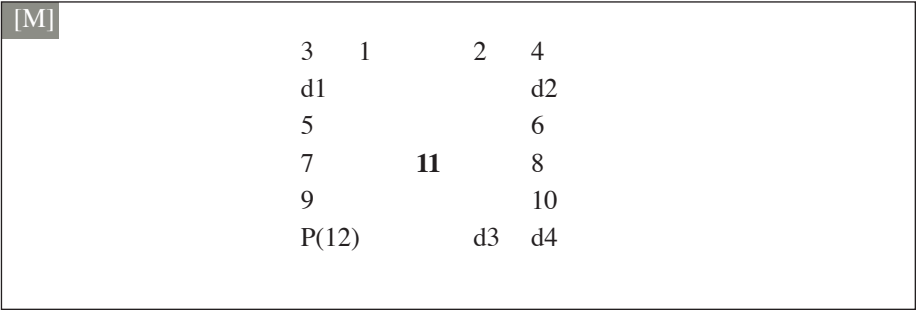
The thangka seems to have been painted during his abbacy (1557–1569) by a devoted disciple. Its patron, the fully ordained monk Chökyong Lhündrub (Chos skyong lhun grub), judging by his portrayal at bottom left, was wealthy and well established. He sits beneath the small gold pagoda of a temple with a blue tiled roof—possibly a temple at Sakya.<sup>397</sup> In a colophon-like inscription he records that he takes refuge in and pays homage to “Sanggye Sengge, King of Dharma in the Three-Realm Universe,

FIG. 8.18  
The Ngor Abbot Sanggye Sengge with a Partial Sakya Lineage  
Ca. 1550s–1560s  
24 ½ x 18 in. (62.23 x 45.72 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.137 (HAR 96)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, no. 88.

Greatest of Teachers,” praying that the master would bless and spiritually assist him in all future lives.<sup>398</sup>

The structure of the painting is shown in diagram [M]. The lineage of minor figures begins above and behind him: 1) Virupa, 2) Sachen, 3) Ngorchen, and 4) Gyaltsheb Kunga Wangchuk. It continues almost unbroken from number 5) Könchok Lhündrup, to the time of the main figure, number 11) Sanggye Sengge. Thus, though the lineage and main figure bring the lineage down to the time of the patron, the preceding lineage is not complete. It is interesting that the second to last lineal guru is number 9) long-haired Kunga Rinchen, the great lay tantrist and head lama from the Sakya Khön family. The placement of two tutelary deities (d1 and d2) in the second row above the heads of the next row of gurus may not be quite right structurally.

The thangka was painted in a formal, conservative Menri style of Tsang, with some admixture of Beri elements. Note the three-jewel motif at the top of the principal figure’s backrest arch. That backrest treats its pair of *shangs shangs* bird-men more realistically, as angelic gandharva-nymph musicians. A pair of pheasantlike *hamsa* geese stands above









the pillars. The background is subtly painted with a simple blue and green landscape. Its only clouds are the formalized pink ones behind the thrones of minor figures, as already found in some Gyantse (rGyal rtse) murals and in a portrait of Ngorchen (Fig. 8.8). Two of the minor masters sit upon later Menri-style mats and backrests. A careful examination of the landscape reveals a few ponds of water and also a typical Menri landscape detail: small patches of craggy cliffs visible now and then along the edge of a hill, such as on the hill that delineates the horizon.

Where did the flamboyant pillars, arches, and jewels originate? From the ancient Indic Beri style, which was also the source of the golden Newar-style scrollwork in the red field within the ornate backrest of the main figure, the only place in the painting where this element is seen. The bases of the two pillars that support the arch actually rest hidden behind the corners of the pedestal. The upper edges of that throne bottom each recede as if painted with one-point perspective. The elegant, complicated pedestal is balanced in the overall construction by two much smaller but very similar thrones and backrests at the top right and left.

In this painting, the backrest arch includes a number of pleasant decorative foliate whorls, such as the ones of tan and pastel colors in the ornate back supports above the main figure's head nimbus. A century earlier, such volutes would have been painted almost exclusively with gold. One also finds incorporated into two supporting posts of the arch two angel-like half bird, half human musicians, both with white feathers and strumming vina-like divine instruments. Note also the golden radiating rays of light painted around the edges of the body and head nimbuses, a characteristic of some Menri-style paintings in Tsang during this period.

Though perhaps not overwhelming at first glance, this thangka is thus a highly successful work of art that repays repeated viewing.

### *Abbacies of the Twelfth through Fourteenth Abbot*

This final subperiod of the Later Beri at Ngor covered roughly from the 1570s until the first decade of the seventeenth century. These decades saw the abbacies of three outstanding abbots:

12. Könchok Palden (dKon mchog dpal ldan, 1526–1590), two tenures: 1569–1579 and 1582/1583–1590
13. Drangti Panchen Namkha Palzang (Brang ti Paṇ chen Nam mkha' dpal bzang, 1535–1602), two tenures: 1579–1582/1583 and 1590–circa 1594; and
14. Sharpa Champa Kunga Tashi (Shar pa Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis, 1558–circa 1603), tenure 1595–circa 1603

During these abbacies, the main rulers of Tsang were the Shigatse-based line of Tsang kings, whose founder was Shingshakpa (Zhing shag pa), a resourceful but self-serving district officer who deceived and rebelled against his Rinpung overlords in about 1565. At their fortress seat of Samdrubtse, these kings honored, first and foremost, the Karmapas as their spiritual preceptors. They also patronized lamas of other traditions, including Sakya and Drukpa Kagyü, though they showed little sympathy to the Geluk Order.

Figure 8.19 is another depiction of a great abbot of Ngor, here seen holding a golden vase of longevity and gazing straight at the viewer with a mild smile. He is, once again, Sanggye Sengge (Sangs rgyas seng ge, 1504–1569), eleventh abbot, as the verses of praise at the bottom indicate.<sup>399</sup> His representa-

FIG. 8.19

The Ngor Abbot Sanggye Sengge as Lineal Guru of the Path with the Fruit  
1580s–1590s  
48 x 26 in. (121.92 x 66.04 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1996.26.1 (HAR 493)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, no. 86.

tion here expresses both spiritual authority and personal warmth. If it was commissioned in the 1580s, that would have been within the living memory of many disciples and servants. Here he does not wear his ceremonial hat as in Figure 8.18. He has reached a venerable age in which the stubble of his hair is silver and his hairline recedes. Thus this may be a somewhat realistic painting of the master as some of his followers fondly remembered him in his sixties, in the last years of his life.

The set belongs to a famous series of portraits of the Path with the Fruit gurus and Ngor abbots that was commissioned in the late sixteenth century.<sup>400</sup> This painting was one of the last few paintings in it, perhaps the thirty-first in the set. Among the minor figures, the last lineal guru portrayed seems to be the abbot Namkha Palzang (1535–1602). It is hard to be sure since the lineage order is split and confusing.

The main figure has previously been identified as the master “Mawai Sengge” or as Rongtön (Rong ston Shes bya kun rig). His misidentification resulted from overlooking the name elements “Sanggye” (Sangs rgyas) and “Sengge” (Seng ge) that were hidden in his ornate verse of eulogy. Rongtön, for his part, had no direct connection with Ngor, though he was a great admirer of Ngorchen, and most of his main disciples went to Ngor to receive tantric teachings. Rongtön founded other monasteries, the most famous being Nalendra in Phenpo Valley of Ü Province. The mistaken identification might have been avoided by keeping in







mind that the main lineage of the entire set is the gurus of the Path with the Fruit *as transmitted at Ngor*.<sup>401</sup>

The painting clearly continues to employ Beri decorative scrollwork within the green, blue, and red head nimbus and back cushion of the main figure. The elegant five-lobed arch around the main figure is supported by ornate pillars, and the upper edge of that arch is ornamented with a border of jewels set in gold. Following age-old convention, each two-segment pillar rests on the prescribed vase, while its second segment culminates in a lotus capital and bracket.

The background enclosed by that arch is intense vermilion, sharply contrasting with the deep azurite blue (not lapis lazuli) background behind it, and is filled with ornate vegetal scrolling.<sup>402</sup> The same prominent scrollwork patterns, there and in the nimbuses, have been repeated over and over. To color the body and head nimbuses, the artists have employed pale blues and greens that seem almost pastel compared with the intense primary and secondary colors that dominate the rest of the painting. The series of tiny jewels along the outer edge of the golden arch are similarly painted with undercoats of almost pastel blue, pink, and green.

The minor figures portray a lineage that is unusual and difficult to recognize, the Demchok Khandro Gyatsho (*bDe mchog mKha' 'gro rgya mtsho*).<sup>403</sup> Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen received it from a guru other than his father or older brother: Sumpa Lotsawa, who appears in the lineage as the Tibetan translator just two generations before Sakya Pandita. The last Indian pundit in this lineage was thus only three generations earlier than Sakya Pandita.<sup>404</sup>

Figure 8.20 portrays the mandala for the initiation of the tantric deity Kālacakra, here as the eleventh thangka in a Vajrāvalī set. Its place in that set is specified by a previously overlooked in-

scription written in gold at top, center. The dating of this thangka and its set is established by another brief golden inscription at the bottom, which states that the painting was very reverently commissioned by “the Drang[ti] monk Namkha Palzang” in memory of his deceased guru, Vajradhara Sanggye Sengge. Since that guru died in 1569 and the patron himself died in 1602, we can confidently date the painting to between 1569 and 1602.<sup>405</sup> This is confirmed by the datings of the last guru in the lineage, called “Paṇḍi ta Gā ga na shrī bhadra,” whose name, when translated from Sanskrit, turns out to be none other than the patron, the “Drang monk Namkha Palzang” of the inscription at bottom. Here we have an example of a lama functioning as both patron and last lineal lama. (This presumably would happen mainly when the patron was himself an established, outstanding lama.) His identity was confused by the misspelling of his clan name Brang (or Brang ti, in full) as Grang. The patron himself could hardly have made such a lapse, except perhaps as a way of poking fun at himself as the “cold monk.”

This mandala exemplifies one of the latest major commissions of mandala sets in the Beri style at Ngor. Its importance is magnified by the identity of its patron as a distinguished authority on tantric ritual, in general, and on the rituals of the Vajrāvalī, in particular. He wrote a liturgy for the Vajrāvalī cycle that was ordered to be used one century later by no less of a connoisseur of ritual and tantric learning than the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682). (Drangti Panchen’s liturgies were one of two chief sources; the second source that they critically compared, looking for inconsistencies, were those of Ngaripa Tshultrim Öser.) When the Fifth Dalai Lama commissioned his own set of Vajrāvalī mandala paintings, which were completed in 1671, he received some help and supervision from his guru for Sakya (Tsharpa)

traditions, Kangyurwa Gönpö Sönam Chokden (1603–1659).<sup>406</sup> At that time, they used outstanding thangkas commissioned by Gongkar Dorjedenpa as their main visual models, and not mandalas from Shalu or Ngor.

Figure 8.20 thus preserves visual evidence of a major mandala set commissioned by one of the greatest ritual experts who served as abbot of Ngor in the sixteenth century or later, Drangti Panchen (Brang ti Paṇ chen). For this Kālacakra tradition, in particular, that patron highly appreciated the line of Butön and the subsequent Shalupa (Zhwa lu pa) or Buluk (Bu lugs, “Butön’s tradition”) masters. Evidently he himself followed in their mainly Shalupa tradition to such an extent that he even wore their yellow pundit’s hat. All lineal gurus between Butön and Drangti Panchen also wore one, including Khyenrab Chöje of Shalu and Nalendra Monasteries. (I doubt that in his lifetime the “red hat” versus “yellow hat” sectarianism was already highly charged enough that his choice of a yellow hat could have been a symbolic antisectarian gesture.)

The painting contains numerous painstaking inscriptions.<sup>407</sup> The lineal gurus are each named by inscriptions; the order is shown in diagram [N].<sup>408</sup> The thangka thus portrays the Kālacakra initiation mandala and the lineage masters of a tradition transmitted by Butön and by subsequent masters at Shalu that reached Ngor very late in its transmission. Among Kālacakra lineages, this was a variation of the Ra tradition (Rwa lugs), the tradition brought to Tibet by Ra Lotsawa Chörab (Rwa Lo tsā ba Chos rab). Ngorchen received another variation of the Ra tradition, that transmitted by Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan) of Jonang from his teacher Yeshe Gyaltsen.<sup>409</sup> He also received the Ra tradition in a transmission through Butön from his teacher Tashi Rinchen





FIG. 8.20  
Mandala of Kālacakra  
1569–1602  
21 ½ x 19 ½ in. (54.6 x 49.5 cm)  
Collection R. R. E.  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1996,  
p. 481, no. 237 (156b).

[N]											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		13							14		
	<b>15</b>									<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
18											19
20											21
	<b>22</b>									<b>23</b>	
		24							25		
26	27	28	29					30	31	32	33



(bKra shis rin chen).<sup>410</sup> Neither of the lineages through Ngorchen is depicted here.

Note the presence of small white stupas or jewels on top of the pillars in the small backrest arches of each minor figure. The more prominently depicted gurus have jewels atop the pillars supporting their trilobate arches.

#### EPILOGUE: TRANSITIONAL AND NON-BERI STYLES

Thus at Ngor in the time of its founder and early abbots, the Beri style was patronized and practiced at a high level. This goes without saying for Ngorchen's time, in the last decades of the Universal Beri period. Ngorchen passed away in 1456, two years before Menla Döndrup (sMan bla don grub) painted his first great murals at Tashilhunpo, in central Tsang relatively near Ngor. The Later Beri period thus began in about the abbacy of the second abbot, Mūchen, who preserved Ngorchen's spiritual traditions loyally. His successors as abbots of Ngor also did, and in their commissions of religious art they remained for generations stylistically conservative, avoiding in their main commissions a wholesale adoption of the new styles, especially the Menri. They resisted the aesthetic revolutions that swept through many other quarters of art patronage in Tibet during the century following Ngorchen's death, i.e., from the 1450s through the 1540s.

With the last two paintings (Figs. 8.19 and 8.20), the long history of the Beri style has nearly reached its conclusion. Figure 8.21 also fits into this period and roughly the same monastic milieu, though the lineage it portrays ends with an illustrious Mustang-born Sakya master, who was originally trained in Lo in the Sakya tradition of Serdokjen Monastery and late in life became abbot of Jonang.

The painting depicts as its main figures two gurus of the Path with the Fruit, surrounded by the monastic ordination lineage of Ngorchen and his successors at Ngor. The two main gurus (G1 and G2) are both of venerable age, with graying hair or balding. If they are the last lamas of the lineage, they probably flourished in the second half of the sixteenth century. The minor figures portray a lineage that features, at the very end, the master Jonang Kunga Drölchok (Jo nang Kun dga' grol mchog, 1507–1566).

Stylistically, the painting stands at the end of the Later Beri. It possesses few obvious Beri elements beyond its predominating red color, linear arrangement of all figures, and the absence of a green foreground. Otherwise, its decorative elements and treatment of body and head nimbuses might as well have been painted by a Menri artist. Some elements, such as the simple lotus leaves with complex centers under the shared pedestal of the main figures, are rarely seen in Menri paintings. The artist painted even the smaller figures with unexpected realism, portraying in strikingly lively postures even the two tiny human athletes who hold up the throne pedestal in the place of elephants or lions.

The painting depicts four minor figures, including two of four famous buddha statues called the four “Jowo brothers” (*jo bo sku mched*)—Wati bzang po at Kyirong and Jamala—who thus should not be misidentified as goddesses.<sup>411</sup> Another minor figure is Virupa shown in his aspect “suppressing the non-Buddhist deity” (*mu stegs lha gnon*). The Indian masters of the lineage are painted variously, some with bare heads and others wearing pundit hats. Their hat colors alternate red and yellow, as in Figure 8.13.

The thangka comes from the same series as a painting in the Collection R. R. E. that shows the Indian lay pundit Gayadhara and Drokmi the translator as main figures.<sup>412</sup> Hence the two main fig-

ures here are gurus of the same lineage. The figures are ordered as shown in diagram [O]. The inscriptions on the front provide the names of both deities and lineal gurus.<sup>413</sup> Large, highly legible gold inscriptions make the names under each figure easy to read.<sup>414</sup> The painting has a provincial character, and it may have been made in western Tsang (La stod) or possibly somewhere in neighboring eastern Ngari (mNga' ris) Province—such as in Lo Mustang (Glo bo) or Dolpo—in the late sixteenth century by a patron who was ordained as a monk in the tradition of Ngorchen and who was also a student of Kunga Drölchok (Jo nang Kun dga' grol mchog).

As indicated by guru numbers 24 and 25, Kunga Drölchok did indeed take monastic ordination from a master of the Sakya School called simply Bumtrak Sumpa ('Bum phrag gsum pa), “He who had [mastered] Three Hundred Thousand [Verses?],” the last of several masters to bear that epithet. Since Kunga Drölchok figures so prominently in the minor lineage (as guru number 25), I wonder whether he was not also the patron's guru in the main lineage, i.e., for the Path with the Fruit teachings, which we can presume was the main subject of the entire set.

Figure 8.22 depicts the wrathful tantric deity Vajrabhairava, blazing forth in a bright flame of gnosis. He is accompanied by two other wrathful deities (above to the right and left) and surrounded by the gurus of his lineage.

Though originating from Ngor Monastery, this painting represents stylistically a clean break from the Beri style. Dating to about the first decades of the seventeenth century, it shows that by then some lamas of Ngor patronized works in a typical Menri style of Tsang. The last guru shown is the renowned Drangti Panchen Namkha Palzang (1535–1602), whom we saw above as one of the last illustrious patrons of the Beri. Note his distinctive yellow pundit





FIG. 8.21  
Two Path with the Fruit Masters, with a  
Ngorpa Monastic Lineage  
1560s–1590s  
26 x 21 ½ in. (66.04 x 54.61 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1996.14.2 (HAR 457)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 85.

[O]									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	d2		d1		d3	12	13	
14				d4				15	
16								17	
18		G1				G2		19	
20								21	
22								23	
24	(P26)		d5	d6	d7	d8	d9	25	





FIG. 8.22  
Vajrabhairava with Ngorpa Lineage  
1590–1620  
40 1/8 x 28 3/8 in. (102 x 72 cm); 42 1/2 x  
30 3/4 in. (108 x 78 cm) including the red  
painted edges  
Collection R. R. E.  
Literature: D. Jackson 1996, pl. 27.

[O]										
		6	4	2	1	3	5	7		
d2		10	8					9	11	d3
14	12							13	15	17
18	16								19	21
20										23
22					d1					25
24										27
26										29
28										30



hat with the short turned-up ear flaps.

The structure of the lineage is shown in diagram [P].<sup>415</sup> This guru lineage is that of the Vajrabhairava Cycle of Eight Zombies (*'Jigs byed Ro lang brgyad bskor*) as received by Ngorchon from Yeshe Gyaltshe, though in Ngorchon's record the first guru, Vajradhara, is omitted.<sup>416</sup> Some deities are also identified through inscriptions.<sup>417</sup>

Figure 8.23 is another non-Beri work of the same religious school and period, a portrait of Drangti Panchen (Brang ti Paṅ chen) Namkha Pal Zangpo or Namkha Palzang, the illustrious patron, ritual expert and guru. The surrounding minor figures in the painting include lineal gurus of the Avalokiteśvara Practical Instructions (Tib. *sPyan ras gzigs dMar khrid*). The thangka is likewise datable to the late sixteenth century (1570s–1590s). A colophon-like inscription on the bottom edge of the painting records that it was commissioned by “the monk Palden” (dGe sbyong dPal ldan) and painted by the artist Samdrup Phüntshok (bSam grub phun tshogs).<sup>418</sup> My hunch is that the “monk Palden” was how his predecessor and successor as Ngor abbot, Könchok Palden, may have humbly referred to himself. If so, the work would date to the 1570s or 1580s. (If not, the dating could move forward a decade or two.)

With this painting, too, we are on the far side of a great stylistic divide, distant from the Beri. Among the special features of the Menri style of Tsang in which the thangka was painted, we should notice the profuse use of gold for outlining clouds, haloes, and rocks. Note, in particular, the radiating gold lines around the edge of the aureole or nimbus behind Namkha Palzang's head, a feature that remained in vogue for awhile among painters of this style.

Despite the great stylistic changes that had taken place with the abandon-



FIG. 8.23  
The Ngor abbot Drangti Panchen Namkha Palzang with Lineal Gurus of the Practical Instructions for Avalokiteśvara  
1570s–1580s  
27 ¼ x 20 ½ in. (70 x 52 cm.)  
Museum der Kulturen Basel, Essen Collection  
Literature: G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo 1989, vol. 2, p. 106, no. II-229.







FIG. 8.24

Ngor Abbot with Lineages  
Ngor Ewam Chöden, Tsang Province;  
second half of the 17th century  
72 4/5 x 55 9/10 in. (185 x 142.2 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2004.15.2 (HAR 65362)

ment of the Beri style, patrons at Ngor by no means stopped commissioning aesthetically worthy and impressive paintings. Figure 8.24, an enormous painting that must have been just one in a very large set, shows that sumptuous patronage of excellent quality continued well into the seventeenth century, if not later.<sup>419</sup> The painting is large enough to easily depict two different lineages, one on each side. Though extensively abraded, enough details survive for us to appreciate it as a masterpiece of its period. Its workmanship can rival, in its strikingly realistic treatment of the faces of minor figures and other details, the work of Chöying Gyatso of Tsang, a painter of national reputation who was mainly based during the same period nearby at Tashilhunpo, just outside Shigatse.<sup>420</sup>

In its structure and content the painting preserves a few features from the Beri, such as the strictly linear arrangement of all figures (with many tiny gurus enframing the central figures) and the placement of the central figure within a trilobate golden arch. But though the columns supporting the arch are built of classic elements such as the vase base and lotus capital, such elements provide only a bare framework for the artist to lavish his decorative skills upon, adding whorls of thick golden filigrees that almost seem to spring out from the columns as flames. (We saw a similar fancy pillar design in Figure 8.18.)

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

With that, my rapid survey of the Beri style draws to its end. A synopsis such as this can provide, I hope, a rough overview of the style, though it is limited to a few datable examples from each period. The examples from Ngor belonged mainly to the later period of the Beri (circa 1460s–1600). Yet, as we saw in chapter 7, the Ngorpa lamas were by no means the only patrons still avidly supporting the style. Even as late as the mid-sixteenth century, patrons from other religious schools similarly continued to commission paintings in the Beri style.

Though in Ngorchén's lifetime all schools of Tibetan Buddhism patronized similar art, within three or four generations the Beri style became rarer and even a stylistic archaism in many places outside Ngor. Even at Ngor, the exclusion of other styles was never absolute. I confronted that in chapter 8, where I was drawn to include four non-Beri paintings in my main narrative. The first was Figure 8.8, a powerful early portrait of Ngorchén with rudimentary landscape. The second and third (Figs. 8.13 and 8.17) were paintings connected with Ngor without most of the usual Beri characteristics, but which were stylistically fairly unobtrusive thanks to their lineal arrangement and lack of landscapes. The fourth painting was Figure 8.18, a case where a Menri artist reintroduced a few striking Beri stylistic elements in a portrait painted in about the 1560s. Meanwhile, some Ngorpa lamas staunchly continued, well into the late sixteenth century, to commission paintings that preserved the main elements of the venerable Newar-inspired Beri style, after most other schools had wholeheartedly adopted the newer Sinic styles. These last major commissions at Ngor, by patrons such as Drangti Panchen, constituted, in fact, a final flourishing of the Beri style.



## PREFACE

<sup>1</sup> The word *bal ris* is pronounced something like “payree” in central Tibetan dialects with an initial aspirated “p,” just as Bon is actually pronounced “Pön.” Smith 1970 used the phonetic spelling Beri, so I continue that here. The word was defined by M. Goldstein 1975 in his *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan* (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar), p. 755, as “school of Tibetan art which originated in Nepal.” His later enlarged *The New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 720, defines the same word as “Nepalese school of painting.” The word in Tibetan is ambiguous and can also refer to pictorial art painted by a Newar or the style of such a picture (*bal pos bris pa’i ri mo’am de’i bris stang*). It more commonly refers to the senses indicated by Goldstein, namely pictorial art produced by Tibetans in conformity with the painting style of the Newars (*bal po’i bris lugs dang mthun par bskrun pa’i bod kyi ri mo*).

## INTRODUCTION

<sup>2</sup> G. Béguin 1977, p. 13: “Studies of this sort will doubtless lead one day to a classification of Himalayan art comparable to that of other Asian arts.”

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Tucci, Béguin, and some others considered the Gyantse murals to represent a style in its own right.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. P. Pal 1985, no. P22.

<sup>5</sup> One exception is D. Jackson 2009, a study of the Karma Gadri style as revived by Situ Panchen. We should also mention the catalog of S. Huntington and J. Huntington 1990. Though it is mainly about the Pāla style of India, it includes much information on the international ramifications and contained a chapter by J. Huntington on the spreading of the style northward to Tibet. Another important contribution on that same early style was the proceedings of a conference panel published by D. Klimburg-Salter and E. Allinger eds. 1998.

<sup>6</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> J. Huntington in S. and J. Huntington 1990, p. 281f. I have abbreviated and reordered his list.

<sup>8</sup> J. Huntington 1968, p. 3, stressed the need to compare the same iconographic type, preferably the same deity.

## CHAPTER I

<sup>9</sup> See G. Tucci 1949, pp. 369–370, numbers 25–27. The three paintings were evidently the first, fourth, and fifth paintings in a set that originally consisted of eight paintings. The paintings’ minor figures were not randomly selected masters as Tucci guessed, but rather 10 or 11 adepts in each painting from the 84 adepts— $8 \times 10.5 = 84$ .

<sup>10</sup> G. Béguin ed. 1977, numbers 109 and 122.

<sup>11</sup> In her later book on Tibetan art and archeology, A. Chayet 1994, p. 189, when discussing prospects for future research on Tibetan art, mentioned the analysis of lineages as a problem calling for further investigation, sketching two typical compositional types, one earlier and one later. See also D. Jackson 1993, which was not yet available to Chayet.

<sup>12</sup> The authorship of this, the second of two anonymous sales catalogs of Tibetan paintings by the Burawoy Gallery in the 1970s, is unclear to me, but somebody in France with competence in Tibetan must have helped the gallery owner, whose main expertise is with Japanese weapons and armor.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, P. Pal 1983, with H. Richardson’s documentation of inscriptions in an appendix; G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo 1989; P. Pal 1991, p. 196, documentation of inscriptions of no. 87 by H. Stoddard; and H. Kreijger 2001, documentation of inscriptions by P. Verhagen.

<sup>14</sup> For instance, H. Stoddard (footnote in P. Pal 1991, appendix); J. C. Singer 1994 and 1997; and Kimiaki Tanaka 1996, pp. 6–9.

<sup>15</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> S. Kossak 1998, p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 26f. Kossak probably expressed the opinion of many when he said that in most cases “connoisseurship rather than the written word” enables one to date a painting as having been made at about the time of the main figure it portrays, as opposed to later, after the main figure’s death. “This can be done on the basis of style, considerations of the lineage shown, and comparison with associated paintings and inscriptions.” Although inscriptions allowing precise dating are certainly rare, Kossak’s statement “It is equally unusual for thangkas to have inscriptions that allow them to be ... associated with a specific school or

monastery” needs reconsideration. If by “inscriptions” he means here a separate colophon-like inscription detailing the commissioning of the particular work, he is, of course, correct. Inscriptions specifying both dates and patron’s name were very rare. But inscriptions with the patron’s names are more common, and inscriptions in a broader sense also include the names inscribed below figures, and these, when present, allow a work to be linked to a specific and concrete lineage, namely the one portrayed in the paintings.

<sup>18</sup> S. Kossak 1998, p. 27: “Although an inexact science, the analysis of style in relation to the few relatively securely datable *thankas*, together with these other factors, serves as our best means of establishing a chronology for the paintings.”

<sup>19</sup> R. Ernst 2001, p. 905.

<sup>20</sup> P. Pal et al. 2003 and J. C. Huntington and D. Bangdel 2003.

<sup>21</sup> See the painstaking documentation of three lineage *thangkas* by C. Luczanits 2003. R. Linrothe and J. Watt eds. 2004, p. 283, catalog no. 42, correctly note an unusual lineage order.

<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, D. Jackson 1986, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2002, and 2003. An earlier version of parts of this chapter appeared as D. Jackson 1999, “Tibetische Thangkas deuten, Teil 1: Die Hierarchie der Anordnung,” *Tibet und Buddhismus* [Hamburg]. No. 50–3, pp. 22–27; “Tibetische Thangkas deuten, Teil 2: Übertragungslinien und Anordnung,” *Tibet und Buddhismus*. No. 50–4, pp. 16–21; and D. Jackson 2005.

<sup>23</sup> See G. Tucci 1949, p. 300ff. Tucci also mentions some basic principles in his chapter on symbolical meanings of colors and lines, pp. 287–288.

<sup>24</sup> See K. M. Gerasimova 1978, p. 47.

<sup>25</sup> On the theory and practice of systems of sacred proportions (iconometry) in Tibetan Buddhist painting, see, for example, D. Jackson 1984, chapter 4 and appendix A.

<sup>26</sup> G. Tucci 1949, p. 301.

<sup>27</sup> See D. Jackson 1984, p. 35; and V. Reynolds et al., 1986, p. 169–171.

<sup>28</sup> See D. Jackson 1984, chapter 4 and Appendix A.

<sup>29</sup> On the Path with the Fruit instructions, see C. Stearns 2001 and 2006.



<sup>30</sup> The structure of this painting has been described in Jackson 1990, pp. 130–132.

## CHAPTER 2

<sup>31</sup> Here it is interesting to compare the remark of D. Martin 1997, p. 15: “The nearly universal concern of Tibetan religious schools for ‘lineage’ is a highly historical sort of preoccupation.”

<sup>32</sup> On the *thob yig* genre, see J. U. Sobisch 2002.

<sup>33</sup> A. Chayet 1994, p. 189, noted such a convention among early *thangkas*.

<sup>34</sup> A case with seventeen gurus on the top line is K. Tanaka 1997, no. 3.

<sup>35</sup> S. G. Karmay 1998, p. 3, caption 1.

<sup>36</sup> The painting would thus seem to date to the same period as Fig. 7.9 (HAR 82), that is, the 15th century.

<sup>37</sup> R. Linrothe and J. Watt 2004, no. 42, p. 283.

<sup>38</sup> A. Chayet 1994, p. 189.

<sup>39</sup> G. N. Roerich trans. 1949/53, p. 282.

<sup>40</sup> Stag lung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal 1992, p. 606.

<sup>41</sup> The identical structure of another *thangka* from this series has been described in Jackson 1990, pp. 138f. For a still later painter with the same basic structure, see P. Pal 1983, p. 88, pl. 24 [P21], a painting described in Jackson 1990, pp. 139–141.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. R. R. Ernst 2001, p. 906; and A. Heller 1999, no. 104, p. 196.

<sup>43</sup> See Ngor chen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 84.1–2.

<sup>44</sup> P. Pal 2003, p. 245.

## CHAPTER 3

<sup>45</sup> G. N. Roerich 1925, p. 15.

<sup>46</sup> Subsequently Tucci devoted a small study to an indigenous description of Indian Buddhist sculpture that he had found in the writings of Padma dkar po. See G. Tucci 1959 and more recently L. S. Dagyal 1977, pp. 51ff., and J. K. Rechung 1990.

<sup>47</sup> G. Tucci 1949, vol. 2, p. vii.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 205f.

<sup>49</sup> P. Pal 1984, and R. Vitali in V. Chan 1994, p. 53, followed him.

<sup>50</sup> For instance, D. Klimburg-Salter 1998 in her brief review of previous studies in D. Klimburg-Salter and E. Allinger eds. 1998, p. 2, overlooks it.

<sup>51</sup> In J. Rosenfield et al. 1966, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts).

<sup>52</sup> P. Pal 1969, p. 35.

<sup>53</sup> E. G. Smith 1970, p. 42. Cf. the revised edition in E. Gene Smith 2001, p. 254.

<sup>54</sup> E. G. Smith 1970, footnote 72.

<sup>55</sup> E. G. Smith 2001, p. 254. I now think that the old western (Nub rnying) style may refer to Gupta art, and not old Kashmiri art.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Burawoy Gallery 1978, no pagination.

<sup>57</sup> P. Pal 1969, p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, A. W. Macdonald and A. Vegeti Stahl 1979, p. 152.

<sup>59</sup> P. Pal 1984, p. 121.

<sup>60</sup> I have heard from a Ngorpa monk in Nepal that many paintings were stolen from Ngor in the early 1960s and smuggled to Kathmandu by men from the eastern-Nepal Himalayan border district of Walung, who repeatedly visited the monastery when it stood unprotected. This might account for the fact that some major and minor icons from Ngor were taken abroad and some sold even before the monastery was completely destroyed during the worst turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1967–69).

<sup>61</sup> R. Vitali 1990, p. 108.

<sup>62</sup> The Sanskrit term *torāṇa* (arch, portal, or gateway) has entered Tibetan art history as the usual term for the decorative backrest arches behind sacred figures, and in particular for the decorative arches consisting of mythical animals and their voluted tails. (See S. L. Huntington 2001, p. 728.) Strictly speaking, the word *torāṇa* corresponds in Tibetan to *rta babs* (arched portal), which is not the usual term for throne backs (*khri rgyab*) or decorative backrests (*rgyab yol*) behind a deity. It is used for the arched portals of mandalas. See also below, chapter 5.

<sup>63</sup> J. Huntington 1990, p. 342f.

<sup>64</sup> Ngor chen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 49a.

<sup>65</sup> J. Huntington 1990, p. 345, note 1.

<sup>66</sup> P. Pal’s entries in J. Rosenfield *et al.* 1966.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. G. Tucci 1949, p. 600. On (dMar ston) rGyal mtshan ‘od zer, who may have been a disciple of Ngorchen, though not a main guru for the later Ngorpa tradition, see D. Jackson 1996, p. 167, note 349.

<sup>68</sup> P. Pal 1983, no. P16.

<sup>69</sup> G. Béguin 1990b, “Remarques concernant les influences néwares dans la peinture tibétaine à l’époque des Phag-mo-gru-pa,” in *Tibet: Civilisation et Société*, pp. 11–18.

<sup>70</sup> G. Béguin 1995, p. 59.

<sup>71</sup> These four phases were mentioned by the article of M. Brauen 2003, p. 87, in I. Kreide-Damani ed. 2003, though not enumerated.

<sup>72</sup> To those Stoddard 1996 added (p. 44) two possible minor styles: 5. Red-Green-Blue-Gold School, (Tsang and western Tibet?) 1000–onward?; and 6. Eastern or Southern Tibet (?), possibly a sub-style that emerged from one of the main ones.

<sup>73</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 42, states that in the Phagmotru period the seat of political power shifted from Ü to gTsang, though it should have been in the other direction.

<sup>74</sup> S. Kossak and J. C. Singer 1998, pp. 25–47.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 40–45.

<sup>76</sup> K. Dowman 1997, p. 186–188.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>78</sup> S. Huntington 1990, p. 70.

<sup>79</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 26.

<sup>80</sup> A. Heller 2002, p. 49.

<sup>81</sup> J. Losty 1989, p. 86.

## CHAPTER 4

<sup>82</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 38 and 40f.

<sup>83</sup> M. Henss 2008, p. 46, no. 29.

<sup>84</sup> S. Kossak 1998, p. 143.

<sup>85</sup> See, for example, S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998, numbers 14 and 22.

<sup>86</sup> Compare also the more recent illustrated book on Sakya Monastery in Chinese: *Xue Yu Ming Cha Sa Jia Si*, Beijing? 2006, and M. Henss 1981, pp. 132–138.

<sup>87</sup> V. Chan 1994, p. 882.

<sup>88</sup> P. Pal 1997, p. 47, plate 23.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. K. Tanaka 1997, no. 39.

<sup>90</sup> Compare also K. Tanaka 1997, no. 43, where the two main figures are both early gurus of the Karma Kagyü, namely Drogön Khache and Pomdrakpa. Their identification as in the “portrait tradition of the Sakya Order” or “style of the Sakya Order” now requires correction. Some figures in the painting can be identified below through inscriptions, including Pema Gyalpo (Padma rgyal po). Note also the archaic cherublike minor deities and other decorative motifs.

<sup>91</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 38ff.

<sup>92</sup> H. Stoddard 2003b, p. 68.

<sup>93</sup> S. Kossak in S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998, p. 124.

<sup>94</sup> On the special iconography of Ling Repa and Tsangpa Gyare, see D. Jackson 2008b, pp. 212f. and 224f.

<sup>95</sup> The lineage is drawn from D. Jackson 2008b, p. 221.

<sup>96</sup> S. Kossak and J. Singer 1998, no. 22.

<sup>97</sup> The lineage may be a short transmission received by Sakya Pandita’s uncle from Sumpa Lot-sawa (Sum pa Lo tsā ba Dar ma yon tan), for if it is a transmission through Bari Lotsawa, its lineage is incomplete.

<sup>98</sup> Though there was a certain logic in misidentifying early Beri paintings as from the Sakya



School, even non-Beri paintings have sometimes been similarly wrongly identified as from Sakya. See, for example, an early mandala of Hevajra in a Tibetan Pāla style. That its lineage of gurus contains many laymen was enough to mislead Leidy and Thurman into identifying it as from the Sakya School. (See D. Leidy and R. Thurman 1997, no. 15; and D. Jackson 2009, fig. 4.5.) The mandala is actually painted in a Pāla style of about 1300 to 1350. None of the three white-clad founding masters of Sakya are present in its lineage. The lineage is, instead, probably that of the Ngok (rNgog) family, which was founded by a prominent lay disciple of Marpa the Translator.

## CHAPTER 5

<sup>99</sup> See M. Brauen 2003.

<sup>100</sup> Compare also Figures 7.34, 7.35 and 7.37, three portraits of Tsongkhapa.

<sup>101</sup> As mentioned above, J. Huntington 1968, p. 3, made this basic point already forty years ago, stressing the need to compare the same iconographic type, preferably the same deity.

<sup>102</sup> A. Mignucci 2001, p. 28, suggested that the main figure is number 10, Rinchen Josay.

<sup>103</sup> The earlier paintings of Yazang Chöje were also published in *ibid.* A. Mignucci 2001 as fig. 4.

<sup>104</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *Blue Annals*, p. 652ff.

<sup>105</sup> I list the minor figures on the left here:

1b. Buddha Amitābha

2b. Buddha Śākyamuni

3b. Avalokiteśvara

4b. Indian monk

5b. Yellow-hatted Indian pundit

6b. Yellow-hatted Indian pundit

7b. Indian adept

8b. Tibetan monk

9b. A dark-skinned, cotton-clad yogi (Ling Repa?)

<sup>106</sup> On the special iconography of Ling Repa as dark-skinned yogi with a white robe, see D. Jackson 2008b, p. 212f.

<sup>107</sup> A. Mignucci 2001, p. 30, suggested that the main figure is 11, Gyalpo Gedze Ö.

<sup>108</sup> Compare *ibid.*, Figures 4 and 5.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>110</sup> On the location of Yazang Monastery in southernmost Upper Yarlung (Yar stod), see Victor Chan 1994, p. 531.

<sup>111</sup> S. Kossak in S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998, p. 124.

<sup>112</sup> A. Mignucci 2001, p. 31, points out the presence of this motif at Drathang.

<sup>113</sup> See also Li Gotami Govinda 1979, p. 42f.

(Kyangphu) and p. 45 (Iwang). In A. Heller 1999, illustration no. 78, we find a winged *garuda* above and little birds perching on top of the decorative backrest arch, next to it. The *makara* is here more recognizable as a crocodile; he lies on his back with tongue emerging, and his tail turns into seven large whorls of volutes.

<sup>114</sup> See A. Heller 1999, illustration nos. 69 (Shalu) and 79 (Yemar).

<sup>115</sup> See P. Pal 2003, no. 99.

<sup>116</sup> But, oddly enough, in two examples that we have just seen, Figures 5.1 and 5.2, the first (painted in the Pāla style) is squarer in shape than the second (in the Beri).

<sup>117</sup> On the basic differences in coloration in the original Pāla and Nepalese manuscripts, see also A. Heller 2002, p. 49, who based her work on J. Losty 1989, p. 86.

<sup>118</sup> The whole multi-animal structure behind the throne can also be called a “backrest design” (*rgyab yol gyi bkod pa*).

<sup>119</sup> D. Klimburg-Salter 1991.

<sup>120</sup> G. Béguin 1995, p. 60.

<sup>121</sup> S. Kramrisch 1964, no. 48.

<sup>122</sup> V. Reynolds et al. 1986, p. 86, note 5, refers to H. Trubner et al. 1973, *Asiatic Art in the Seattle Art Museum* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum), no. 53.

<sup>123</sup> V. Reynolds et al. 1986, p. 83.

<sup>124</sup> See J. Huntington 1990, p. 331, who also illustrates the corresponding Pāla convention for the end of beams, with its more prominent protuberances.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. S. Kossak in S. Kossak and J.C. Singer 1998, p. 153, no. 41, in which the attendant goddesses wear both types of earrings.

<sup>126</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 39.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>128</sup> J. Huntington 1990, p. 331.

<sup>129</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 41.

<sup>130</sup> Gyurme Dorje in an email kindly shared these gate details with me in connection with his forthcoming translation of Kongtrül’s chapter on art (*bzo rig*) in his treatise *Shes bya kun khyab*.

<sup>131</sup> See M. Brauen 1997, p. 68, who explains the different viewpoints from which the elements of a mandala are portrayed.

## CHAPTER 6

<sup>132</sup> Cf. G. Béguin 1995, p. 59.

<sup>133</sup> Some have suggested that I should call this style in every case “Universal *Tibetan* Beri.” But I think that the word “Tibetan” need not be added in every case since the context of discussion is Tibetan painting.

<sup>134</sup> According to J. Huntington and D. Bangdel 2003, p. 96, note 2, Bangdel’s information was based on the unpublished M.A. thesis of Amy Miller Livingston, “A Study of the Iconography, Style and Origin of Three Tibetan Thangka Paintings” (The Ohio State University, 2001).

<sup>135</sup> M. Rhie 1991, no. 122, p. 315.

<sup>136</sup> See R. Linrothe ed. 2006, p. 243.

<sup>137</sup> P. Pal 2003, p. 198, calls the rocks “the most typically Newari prismatic rocks.”

<sup>138</sup> Philip Lieberman, Lama Ngawang Jorden and Marcia R. Lieberman 2003 document Luri and the other two main Mustang mural sites in a DVD of photos published by Brown University.

<sup>139</sup> H. Neumann 1997, p. 185.

<sup>140</sup> H. Neumann 1994, p. 193.

<sup>141</sup> The available photographs do not furnish readable inscriptions, though each guru is named.

<sup>142</sup> Their identities need to be confirmed through the inscriptions.

<sup>143</sup> H. Neumann 1997, p. 183.

<sup>144</sup> See P. Pal 1984 (plate 18), p. 44f.; J. Huntington 1990, p. 329ff.; and S. Kossak 1998 (no. 37), p. 145f.

<sup>145</sup> S. Kossak’s figure 21 was R. Vitali 1990, pl. 71.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170–172.

<sup>147</sup> F. Ricca and L. Fournier 2001, p. 106.

<sup>148</sup> H. Kreijger 1997, p. 170.

<sup>149</sup> H. Neumann 1997, p. 183.

<sup>150</sup> H. Kreijger 1997, p. 175.

<sup>151</sup> F. Ricca and L. Fournier 2001, p. 115. Ricca and Fournier add that the later temple’s group of five Tathāgatas (Jinas) “betrays on closer scrutiny a somewhat rigid and scholastic interpretation.”

<sup>152</sup> R. Vitali 1990, p. 108.

<sup>153</sup> F. Ricca and L. Fournier 2001, p. 115, refer to the “fundamental impossibility” of Vitali’s conjecture.

<sup>154</sup> H. Neumann 2001, p. 40ff.

<sup>155</sup> This last lama is referred to in the *Blue Annals* on p. 750, where he is called “mKhas btsun gZhon nu grub.”

<sup>156</sup> As noted by H. Neumann 2001, p. 42.

<sup>157</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, Record of Teachings Received, vol. 1, p. 71a: thugs rje chen [p. 71b] po skyer sgang lugs lha gsum ma’i rig gtad thob pa’i brgyud pa ni:

1. ‘Phags pa sPyan ras gzigs
2. Grub chen Rā hu la gupta badzra
3. Jo bo chen po Dī paṃ kā ra shrī dznyā na
4. Nag tsho Lo tsā ba Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba



5. Rong pa Phyag sor ba Shes rab 'bar	16d. Yongs 'dzin dKon cog 'phel	<sup>159</sup> Ngorchen, <i>Thob yig rgya mtsho</i> , p. 85.2: <i>thugs rje chen po skyer sgang lugs kyi rig gtad kyi brgyud pa ni</i> :
6. Wa yu ba Shes rab tshul khirms	17d. rJe Lha mchog seng ge	1. Thugs rje chen bo
7. lCe sgom Shes rab rdo rje	18d. rJe Sangs rgyas seng ge	2. Byang sems Blo gros rin chen
8. dBon ston sKyer sgang pa Chos kyi seng ge	19d. Mus pa Nam mkha' dpal bzang	3. Ā la la badzra
9. gNyan ston Chos kyi shes rab (also known as sBas pa'i rnal 'byor)	20d. Ngor sGrub khang pa mKhas grub dPal ldan don grub	4. Ka ta yan badzra
10. Chos rje sTon pa bTson 'grus seng ge (also known as mKhas grub Shangs ston)	21d. mKhan chen Zha lu pa	5. Rā hu la bha dra
11. 'Gro mgon Shangs ston Tshul khirms 'bum	25. The Fifth Dalai Lama.	6. Jo bo rje
12. gNyan ston rGyal mtshan dpal bzang (also called Mus chen rGyal mtshan dpal bzang)	Again from guru number 15, Mus chen,	7. Nag tsho lotstsha ba
13. sNgags 'chang rDo rje gzhon nu	16e. Kun mkhyen Go bo Rab 'byams pa	8. mNga' ris Sher rgyal
14. Mus chen Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor	16d. dKon cog 'phel, and after him, the same as above.	9. lCe sgom pa
15. Sems dpa' chen po dKon cog rgyal mtshan	Again from guru number 12, Mus chen rGyal mtsan dpal bzang,	[Missing? Grub thob sKyer sgang pa?]
16. Kun mkhyen bSod nams seng ge	13f. Bla ma Nam mkha' dbang phyug	[Missing? mKhan po gSang ba shes rab?]
17. rJe btsun rDo ring pa chen po	14. Mus chen Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor, and after him, the same as before	10. bKra shis bsod nams
18. rDo rje 'chang Tshar pa Chos rje	According to the shorter transmission in which Avalokiteśvara gave the teachings to Mūchen Sempa Chenpo in a vision: 'Phags pa Thugs rje chen po, and 15, Sems dpa' chen po dKon cog rgyal mtshan, and after him, the same as above.	11. mKhan chen bDe ba dpal
19. Kun mkhyen mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug	Or, from guru number 8, Grub thob sKyer sgang pa,	12. Ka bzhi pa Grags gzhon
20. Khyab bdag dBang phyug rab brtan	9g. mKhan po gSang ba shes rab	13. bSod nams grags pa
21. Paṇ chen Ngag dbang chos grags	10g. bKra shis bsod nams	14. rGyal sras Thogs med
22. Yangs can mKhan po Ngag dbang rnam rgyal	11g. mKhan chen bDe ba dpal	15. Sa bzang 'Phags pa
23. dPal Sa skya pa Ngag dbang bsod nams dbang phyug	12g. dKa' bzhi pa Grags gzhon	16. Ngor chen
24. rDo rje 'chang Rin cen bsod nams mchog grub	13g. mKhan chen bSod nams grags pa	<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 73.3: <i>Ni gu ma chos drug khrid kyi brgyud pa</i> :
25. Za hor Bande, as the Fifth Dalai Lama refers to himself.	14g. rGyal sras Thogs med pa	1. rDo rje 'chang
<sup>158</sup> The Fifth Dalai Lama lists, alternatively, as a lineage continuing from guru number 10. Shangs ston:	15g. Sa bzang 'Phags pa	2. Ni gu ma
11b. mKhas btsun rGyal mtshan 'bum	16g. Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po	3. Khyung po rNal 'byor
12b. 'Jag chen Byams pa dpal bzang	17g. rGyal tsab Kun dga' dbang phyug	4. rMog cog pa Rin chen brtson 'grus
13b. 'Jag pa Blo gros dpal bzang	16d. rJe dKon cog 'phel, and after him, the same as before.	5. dBon ston sKyer sgang ba Ye shes seng ge
14b. 'Jag chen Kun dga'	Or else, from guru number 11, Shangs ston Tshul khirms 'bum,	6. Ri gong pa
15b. rJe Chos rgyal dpal bzang	12h. Khyung po Tshul khirms mgon po	7. gNyan ston Thog rdugs
16b. 'Khrul zhig Tshul khirms rgyal	13h. Ras chen Sangs rgyas seng ge	8. Sangs rgyas sTon pa
17b. sKu zhang mKhyen rab chos rje	14h. Shangs dkar ba Rin cen	9. mKhas grub gZhon nu grub
17. rDo ring Rin po che, after whom the lineage continues as above.	15h. rJe Sangs rgyas dpal bzang	10. Ba lung ba bSod grags
Or else, from guru number 15, Mus chen dKon cog rgyal mtshan,	16h. Grub chen Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan	11. Bla ma dPal ldan tshul khirms
16c. Chos rje Zur khang pa dPal ldan rin cen	17h. rGya sgom Legs rgyal	12. Bla ma dam ba Buddhāshī
17c. rJe btsun sGo rum pa Kun dga' legs pa	18h. rJe btsun Kun dga' grol mchog	13. Ngor chen
19. Kun [p. 72a] mkhyen mKhyen brtse, after whom the lineage continues as above.	19h. rJe Kun dga' rgyal mtsan	<sup>161</sup> The cult of "Śaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara" with his two companions in Pāla-period northeastern India (Bihar and Bengal) is briefly alluded to by S. Huntington 2001, p. 393f. The stone statue of him that she presents (her Fig. 18.6) dates to about the eleventh or twelfth century, and she notes the presence on it of foliate decorative motifs (as the tail of a mythical bird?) to the right and left of Avalokiteśvara's head nimbus, which may have served as prototypes for Nepalese painted designs of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.
Again from guru number 15, Mus chen dKon cog rgyal mtshan,	20h. sNgags 'chang dKon cog legs pa	
	20d. sGrub khang pa, and after him, the same as before.	

<sup>162</sup> See M. Tachikawa et al. 1995, nos 100–102; and M. Willson and M. Brauen 2000, nos. 100–102.

<sup>163</sup> Peking catalog no. 4839, entitled ‘*Phags pa yi ge drug pa’i sgrub thabs*’.

<sup>164</sup> See the Peking catalog, nos. 4221–4466, for all 245 items in this collection.

<sup>165</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol 2, pp. 19a–19b. One *sādhana* was by Śrī Sahajalalita (Tib. dPal ldan lhan cig skyes pa’i rol pa: Peking number 4226), and the other does not specify the name of its author (Peking catalog no. 4229). A third *sādhana* of Avalokiteśvara in the same form, but called “Lord of the World” (‘Jig rten mgon po), also exists nearby in the same collection. Despite the different name in the title, it is said to be a *sādhana* of Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara at both the beginning and end of the work (Peking catalog no. 4228), so it should be counted here, too. The Fifth Dalai Lama was given all three teachings, including a brief initiation-permission (*rjes gnang*) for each, when receiving the Ocean of Sādhana (sGrub thabs rgya mtsho) collections were received for all three. (For two other *sādhana*s from yet another *sādhana* collection of the Tanjur, see Peking catalog numbers 3971 and 3972.)

<sup>166</sup> M. Willson and M. Brauen 2000, no. 101.

<sup>167</sup> Similar lineages should be possible to locate for this or similar lineages of Atiśa in Loter Wangpo’s (Blo gter dbang po, 1847–1914) record of teachings received for his later non-canonical Compendium of Sādhana (*sGrub thabs kun btus*) collection that was published from the great Derge printery in the early twentieth century.

<sup>168</sup> For the detailed *sādhana*, see Jonang Jetsün Tāranātha, *Yi dam rgya mtsho’i grub thabs rin chen ‘byung gnas*, fols. 134a–137b; p. 269ff.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 847; vol. *ba*, fol. 20a:

A. ‘Phags pa sPyan ras gzigs (Avalokiteśvara)

B. Grub thob Rā hu la

1. Jo bo rje (Atiśa)

2. Nag tsho Tshul khirms rgyal ba

3. Rong pa Phyag sor ba

4. Ba yu ba

5. lCe sgom Nag po

6. sKyer sgang pa

7. gNyan ston pa

8. Sangs rgyas sTon pa

9. Shangs ston (1234–1309)

10. Khyung po Tshul mgon (fl. ca. late thirteenth and early fourteenth century)

11. mNyam med Sangs rgyas dpal bzang (fl. ca. mid-fourteenth century)

12. Grub chen Nam kha’ rgyal mtshan

13. rGya sgom Legs rgyal

14. rJe btsun Kun dga’ grol mchog

15. mKhan chen Lung rigs rgya mtsho

16. Tāranātha

<sup>170</sup> M. Willson and M. Brauen 2000 as no. 435.

<sup>171</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol. 2, p. 37a:

1. rDo rje sems dpa’ (Vajrasattva, the only deity before Atiśa)

1. Jo bo rje (Atiśa)

2. rNal ‘byor pa chen po

3. sPyan snga Tshul khirms ‘bar

4. Bya yul ba

5. gNubs Ye shes seng ge

6. sGom pa Seng ge skyabs

7. mChims Nam mkha’ grags (1210–1285)

8. ‘Dul ‘dzin Grags pa brtson ‘grus

9. mChims Blo bzang grags pa

10. Gro ston Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan

11. dPang ston Grub pa shes rab

<sup>172</sup> Loter Wangpo, *Record of Teachings Received, The Compendium of Tantras* (*rGyud sde kun btus*), p. 11.

1. Jo bo rje dPal ldan A ti sha (Atiśa)

2. ‘Brom ston rGyal ba’i ‘byung gnas (Dromtön)

3. sPyan snga ba

4. Bya yul ba

5. Mus sman pa

6. Gro ston bDud rtsi grags, at Narthang as abbot about 1192–1230?

7. Sangs rgyas sGom pa Seng ge skyabs, at Narthang as abbot about 1230–1240?

8. mChims ston (Nam mkha grags, 1210–1285)

9. Seng ge skyabs [p. 12] (fl. mid- to late 13th century)

10. bSod nams ye shes (fl. late 13th to early 14th century)

11. bSod nams grags pa (fl. early to mid-14th century)

12. rGyal sras thogs med (1295–1369)

13. Sangs rgyas dpal (=Buddhashrī) (1339–1419)

14. Ngor chen Kun dga’ bzang po (1382–1456)

<sup>173</sup> P. Pal 2001, no. 131.

<sup>174</sup> J. Casey Singer 2003, fig. 21.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>177</sup> M. Willson and M. Brauen 2000, p. 296, no. 213.

<sup>178</sup> Ngor chen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 84.1.3.

<sup>179</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol. 1, p. 86b: *ba ri lugs kyi rnam ‘joms lha gcig pa*.

<sup>180</sup> M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991, no. 132.

<sup>181</sup> bSod nams rgya mtsho and M. Tachikawa 1989, *The Ngor Mandalas of Tibet* (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies). But here in plate 105 the main deity has his feet in the position of plate 99.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. bSod nams rgya mtsho and M. Tachikawa 1989, no. 99: Ngor lugs kye rdor man ngag lugs lha dgu’i dkyil ‘khor. But in this later collection of the mandalas for the early-twenty-century *rGyud sde kun btus* tantric compendium of Blo gter dbang po, the only one with a similar foot position is no. 107, the rNgog tradition of Marpa Lotsawa’s disciple. Indeed, nos. 105 and 107 are almost identical iconographically, except for the placement of the central figure’s feet.

<sup>183</sup> These eight vases are shown in bSod nams rgya mtsho and M. Tachikawa 1989, no. 99, but not in nos. 105 and 107.

<sup>184</sup> P. Pal 1991, p. 148 dated it to the thirteenth century, without referring to its lineage.

<sup>185</sup> The Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, p. 191a: *rje btsun sa skya pa yab sras la kye rdor bka’ babs bzhi bzhugs pa* [p. 191b] *las rnal ‘byor dbang phyug birwa pa dang ye shes kyi mkha’ ‘gro gnyis kyis dngos su byin gyis brlabs pa’i grub chen dombhi he ru kas legs par bkral ba’i kye rdor dombhi lugs su grags pa lha dgu’i ras bris kyi dkyil ‘khor du theg chen rin po ches mdzad pa’i mngon rtogs yan lag drug pa las dang po pa ‘jug bde dang dkyil chog kye rdor rnam par rol pa la brten nas dbang bzhi rdzogs par nos pa’i brgyud pa ni*. 1. rDo rje ‘chang (Vajradhara)

2. bDag med ma

3. Birwa pa

4. Dombhi He ru ka

5. Ā na la badzra

6. Nags khrod pa

7. Garbha ri pa

8. Dza ya shrī dznyā na. (The Fifth Dalai Lama notes in an annotation that the name of Dza ya shrī dznyā na was not recorded in this position in the *gsan yig* of guru 25, Gong dkar ba, but since it was present in Thartse Panchen’s *gsan yig*, the Fifth Dalai Lama thought the other omission to be an erroneous oversight.)

9. Mi thub zla ba

10. dPa’ bo rdo rje

11. ‘Brog mi Lo chen

12. mNga’ ris pa gSal ba’i snying po



13. 'Khon sGye chu ba dGra lha 'bar
  14. Sa chen (Sachen)
  15. rTse mo
  16. rJe btsun pa
  17. Sa paṇ
  18. 'Phags pa Rin po che
  19. Zhang mDo sde dpal
  20. Lo tsā ba mChog ldan
  21. Bla ma dPal ldan seng ge
  22. mKhan chen Shes rab rdo rje
  23. Chos sgo ba Chos dpal shes rab
  24. Brag thog pa bSod nams bzang po
  25. Kun mkhyen rDo rje gdan pa (Gongkar Dorjedenpa, 1432–1496)
- <sup>186</sup> I have brought the thangka to the attention of Dr. Dan Martin, but he, too, was not able to identify the lamas or their lineage, though he agreed that Phadampa Sanggye is portrayed. On portraits of that adept, see D. Martin 2006.
- <sup>187</sup> H. Stoddard 2003, p. 68, n. 28.
- <sup>188</sup> P. Pal 1982, p. 62.
- <sup>189</sup> On the dating of the Sumtsek, see also C. Luczanits 1998, p. 153, note 9; C. Luczanits 2003, p. 27ff.; and R. Goeppe 2003, p. 15ff.
- <sup>190</sup> J. Huntington in Susan L. Huntington 2001, p. 384.
- <sup>191</sup> C. Luczanits 1998, p. 154.
- <sup>192</sup> D. Klimburg-Salter 1997, p. 40.
- <sup>193</sup> C. Luczanits 2002, p. 121.
- <sup>194</sup> Cf. Melissa R. Kerin 2009, cat. no. 50, which shows a western Tibetan Drukpa Kagyü lineage with Nyingma elements for this bodhisattva dating to the sixteenth century.
- <sup>195</sup> J. Huntington 1990, p. 336.
- <sup>196</sup> Compare the dark blue Vajrasattva with consort published by Kossak and Singer 1998, no. 42 (Musée Guimet number MA1089). Kossak dates it to the first half of the fourteenth century, though that seems late to me.
- <sup>197</sup> See bSod nams rgya mtsho and M. Tachikawa 1989, no. 3.
- <sup>198</sup> Milarepa is said to have criticized the modest approach to tantra (showing the male deities alone) of Gampopa's previous Kadampa teachers when he first met Gampopa. See G. Roerich transl., *Blue Annals*, p. 456, where this way of visualizing deities is called "in their widower aspect."
- <sup>199</sup> P. Pal 1991, p. 146; and P. Pal 1983, p. 136.
- <sup>200</sup> P. Pal 1983, no. P3.
- <sup>201</sup> J. Huntington 1990, p. 336.
- <sup>202</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>203</sup> This section of Tāranātha's *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa* were transmitted by the Indian master Śākyarakṣita. The Seven Hero Buddhas are in Tibetan: *Sangs rgyas dpa' bo bdun*. See also the published examples in M. Willson and M. Brauen 2000, nos. 237–243.
- <sup>204</sup> See M. Willson and M. Brauen 2000, nos. 40–48, here including two bodhisattva attendants of the Medicine Buddha as numbers 40 and 42.
- <sup>205</sup> On Buddha Nāgeśvararāja and his four companion bodhisattvas, see also M. Willson and M. Brauen 2000, nos. 49–51.
- <sup>206</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol. 1, p. 52a:
1. Sangs rgyas Klu dbang gi rgyal po (Nāgeśvararāja)
  2. 'Phags pa Klu sgrub (Nāgārjuna)
  3. Jo bo A ti sha (Atiśa)
  4. 'Brom ston pa rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas
  5. bShes gnyen Po to pa
  6. dGe bshes Sha ra ba
  7. gTum ston Blo gros grags
  8. Zhang ston rDo rje 'od zer
  9. Gro ston Shes rab grags
  10. mChims Nam mkha' grags
  11. bCom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri
  12. dPal sdings pa (shar pa'i gsan yig na dkyus lhar byung la sngags 'chang dkon legs pa'i gsan yig na 'di gnyis go ldog tu snang ba brtag)
  13. 'Dul 'dzin Grags pa dpal
  14. mNga' ris Byang chub bla ma
- <sup>207</sup> D. Klimburg-Salter 1998, figs. 2 and 3.
- <sup>208</sup> J. Huntington 1990, p. 338.
- <sup>209</sup> Ibid., p. 331.
- <sup>210</sup> Huntington, *ibid.*, figure 57, illustrated the respective Nepali and Pāla conventions for depicting tips of horizontal architectural members.
- <sup>211</sup> P. Pal 1984, p. 62f.
- <sup>212</sup> P. Pal 1991, p. 146.
- <sup>213</sup> D. Klimburg-Salter 1998, p. 3, note 4.
- <sup>214</sup> D. Klimburg-Salter 1998, fig. 2. H. Kreijger 2001, no. 7, p. 42, rightly notes some similarities between his Jucker collection number 7 and the Spiti thangkas mentioned by Klimburg-Salter.
- <sup>215</sup> P. Pal 1983, 136.
- <sup>216</sup> J. Huntington 1990, p. 339, n. 8.
- <sup>217</sup> For two of Gansser's photos, see Michael Henss 1981, *Tibet: Die Kulturdenkmäler* (Zurich: Atlantis), p. 42f.

- <sup>218</sup> A. Heim and A. Gansser 2000, p. 147; and M. Henss 1996, p. 207.
- <sup>219</sup> Victor Chan 1994, p. 972.
- <sup>220</sup> Sibchilim is called Shib Chilum on Victor Chan's map NH44–6B, from which I estimate that Pangtha is located at approximately 31 degrees, 1 minute by 80 degrees, 16 minutes.
- <sup>221</sup> See also Li Gotami Govinda 1979, p. 127, who describes and photographs the nearby abandoned extensive cave settlement of Dawa Dzong, likewise presumed to have been abandoned because of dessication.
- <sup>222</sup> R. Vitali 1999, *Records of Tho.ling: A Literary and Visual Reconstruction of the "Mother" monastery in Gu.ge* (Dharamshala: Amnye Machen Institute), plate xiii, "Tho.ling and its branch monasteries," p. 113.
- <sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 151.
- <sup>224</sup> Samten G. Karmay and Jeff Watt eds. 2007, *Bon: The Magic Word* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art), p. 16. For a photo of the lama of Gurugem, see Li Gotami Govinda 1979, p. 121.
- <sup>225</sup> Blanche Olschak and Geshe Thupten Wangyal 1973, p. 201.
- <sup>226</sup> Olschak and Wangyal 1973 illustrated on number 52 a four-handed orange Mañjuśrī as main figure. The painting is interesting for its simplified Beri backrest-arch pillar. The pillars upon which geese (*hamsa*), with golden voluted tails that form two roundels, stand on both sides, may show the dried flower heads of lotuses projecting beyond the last blooming flower. At least I am tempted to see it so, especially when a water fowl perches upon it. Could that be the natural origin of that part of the motif, which in later depictions usually seems to be just a final bracket on top of the top lotus? These paintings seem to have lost one color through aging—an organic yellow?
- <sup>227</sup> D. I. Lauf ed. 1969, numbers XIII/73 and XIV/74. Lauf wrongly states that the paintings came from southern Tibet.
- <sup>228</sup> B. Olschak and Geshe Thupten Wangyal 1973, p. 50f.
- <sup>229</sup> D. I. Lauf et al. eds. 1969, p. 68. A. Heim and A. Gansser 2000, fig. 165, called the main figure of the painting "Buddha Gotama making the gesture of the teacher."
- <sup>230</sup> J. Huntington in Susan L. Huntington 2001, p. 384.
- <sup>231</sup> One lesson that we must learn: Always consider all known paintings from a set. A related one: avoid sweeping or ironclad conclusions from just a single member of a set. The stylistic variation is often much greater than expected (a single painting can be downright misleading). My favorite example of such wide variation in the dress of Pāla-style bodhisattvas is published in H. Kreijger 2001, nos. 8a and 8b. These two paintings from the same set portray the *dhotis* of their bodhisattvas in lengths and styles that vary, for me at least, wildly. But for the painter these two treatments must have

fallen within the acceptable range of variation.

<sup>232</sup> C. Luczanits 1998, p. 154.

<sup>233</sup> D. Klimburg-Salter 1998, p. 2. Klimburg-Salter here means Pāla when she says post-Pāla.

<sup>234</sup> See also D. Pritzker 2000.

<sup>235</sup> Full acceptance of these artistic trends lagged a century or more behind the central Tibetan provinces of Ü and Tsang. P. Pal 1984, p. 98, anticipated this presumption twenty-five years ago, asserting that western Tibetan artists were fond of archaisms.

## CHAPTER 7

<sup>236</sup> Some later patrons or painters at Riwoche decided to copy Pāla style paintings as late as the sixteenth century. There also existed rare combination of Pāla elements with Chinese backgrounds, such as in S. Kossak 1998, number 33, which dates to the mid- or late fourteenth century and was presumably painted at Riwoche in northwestern Kham Province.

<sup>237</sup> Ngorchen, *Record of Teachings Received*, p. 93d, gives this related lineage: *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi gtsug tor rnam rgyal tor rnam rgyal zhes bya ba'i gzung rtoḡ pa dang bcas pa ba ri'i 'gyur/ yang rnam rgyal gyi gzung rtoḡ ba dang bcas pa ba ri'i 'gyur rnam kyi brgyud pa ni:*

1. Sangs rgyas (Buddha)
2. 'Jam dpal
3. Dze tā ri
4. dGra las rnam rgyal
5. rDo rje gdan pa che ba
6. rDo rje gdan pa chung ba
7. Ba ri Lotstsha ba
8. Sa skya pa chen po
9. Slob dpon rin po che
10. rJe btsun pa
11. Sa skya Paṇḍi ta Chen po
12. Bla chen 'Phags pa
13. Glo chen
14. Bla ma gZhon tshul
15. Slob dpon mGon po 'bum
16. Bla ma bram chen, and
17. Sa bzang Paṇ chen

<sup>238</sup> The identity of the patron has been noted also by A. Heller in M. Brauen 2009, p. 99.

<sup>239</sup> Butön, *Record of Teachings*, p. 74.6

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., p. 82.4.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 82.5.

<sup>242</sup> This master is mentioned by Gö Lotsawa, *Blue Annals*, p. 413.

<sup>243</sup> The Tibetan: *dkyil 'khor bcu drug pa nam mkha' rnal 'byor lha lnga bcu rtsa gsum gyi dkyil 'khor la/ gra bzhi dang smad la gdan bzhi'i phyag lag gi lha mo rnam dang lha chen brgyad phyi* [sic] *kyis skong ba.*

<sup>244</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *Blue Annals*, p. 412ff.

<sup>245</sup> Butön, *Record of Teachings Received*, p. 112.1 (*la* 56b).

<sup>246</sup> D. Seyfort Ruegg 1966, p. 96.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., p. 108. See also Gö Lotsawa, *Blue Annals*, p. 423.

<sup>248</sup> A. Heller 1999, no. 64.

<sup>249</sup> On the dates of Śākyaśrībhadrā, 1140s–1225, see D. Jackson 1990b, *Two Biographies of Śākyaśrībhadrā: The Eulogy by Khro-phu Lo-tā-ba and its "Commentary" by bSod-nams-dpal-bzang-po. Texts and Variants from Two Rare Exemplars Preserved in the Bihar research Society, Patna*, p. 18, note 1.

<sup>250</sup> G. Tucci 1949, pp. 334ff., thangka number 9 (plate 6 and 7); see also P. Pal 1998, no. 22.

<sup>251</sup> P. Pal 1998, p. 45.

<sup>252</sup> G. Tucci 1949, p. 338; and D. Jackson 1990b, p. 34, verse 27.

<sup>253</sup> This is verse 26 in D. Jackson 1990b.

<sup>254</sup> On these four monastic communities, see Gö Lotsawa, *Blue Annals*, p. 1072ff.

<sup>255</sup> A. Heller 1999, p. 84f., no. 64, dates the painting of Khache Panchen Śākyaśrī's biography studied by Tucci (1949, thangka number 9) also to this period, though its lineage as I interpret the presence of the five lamas below it (Śākya Pandita and four of his monastic successors?) indicates a dating that is earlier by a generation or two.

<sup>256</sup> The Tibetan of the inscription reads: *don gyi slad du mtshan nas smos te/ ?? ??* [illegible] *mkhan chen? rin po che? bkra shis tshul khriims la phyag 'tshal lo/ mchod do/ skyabs su mchi'oll.*

<sup>257</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *Blue Annals*, p. 1072.

<sup>258</sup> Ngorchen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 45.3f.

<sup>259</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *Blue Annals*, p. 1072.

<sup>260</sup> J. Huntington 1990, p. 344f.

<sup>261</sup> The Tibetan from J. Huntington 1990, p. 345: ... *mkhas grub bla ma pa la [=dpal] ldan tshul khriims kyi ... gongs rjo gas [=rdzogs] phyir/ ....* [some words omitted] ... *sby[i]n bdag ye shes rgyal ... dpal bzang po....*

<sup>262</sup> Ngor chen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 49a, *rdo rje gur rigs bsod pa'i dkyil 'khor du dbang bskur ba thob pa'i brgyud pa:*

1. rDo rje 'chang
2. Birwa pa
3. Ḍombhi He ru ka
4. Ā la la badzra
5. Nags khrod pa

6. Garbha ri pa

7. bSod snyoms pa Dza ya shrī

8. Mi thub zla ba

9. dPa' bo rdo rje

10. 'Brog mi Shākya ye shes

11. mNga' ris pa gSal ba'i snying po

12. 'Khon sGyi chu ba

13. rJe Sa skya pa chen po

14. Ne co sBal ston

15. rTa stag so ba Rin chen don grub

16. Gan pa sTon dar

17. Gan pa So ston

18. Gan pa Chos rgyal

19. Gan pa Chos rin

20. Gan pa Rin rgyal

21. Chos rje bSod nams rgyal mtshan

22. Bla ma dPal ldan tshul khriims

23. Chos rje Ye shes rgyal mtshan

24. Ngorchen

<sup>263</sup> The Tibetan: *brgyud yig gcig las sa chen yan chad kye rdor man ngag lugs dang 'dra bar byas pa ni ma dag ste.*

<sup>264</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, p. 193a: *Kun mkhyen bsod nams seng ges mdzad pa'i sgrub thabs dngos grub rgya mtsho dang dkyil chog bde chen rgya mtsho, ngor chen dkon cog lhun grub kyis mdzad pa'i sgrub dkyil gyi gsal byed rab gsal snang ba rnam la bsten nas dpal kye rdo rje'i bshad rgyud thun mong ma yin pa gur rigs bsodus pa mkha' 'gro lnga'i ras bris kyi dkyil 'khor du man ngag lugs dang 'grel pa lugs gnyis las 'grel pa lugs kyi dbang bzhi legs par thob pa'i brgyud pa ni.*

1. rDo rje 'chang
2. bDag med ma
3. Grub chen Birwa pa
4. Slob dpon Ḍombhi He ru ka
5. Ā la la badzra
6. Bā na pi pa
7. Garbha ri pa
8. bSod snyoms pa Dza ya shrī dznyā na
9. Slob dpon Mi thub zla ba
10. Grub chen Pradnya aindra ru tse
11. 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba Shākya ye shes

12. mNga' ris pa gSal ba'i snying po (Here the Fifth Dalai Lama comments: *rje btsun btsong kha pa'i gsan yig na 'di gnyis kyi tshab tu 'khon dkon cog rgyal po snang zhing phyi ma 'di mkhyen brtse dang thar rtse'i gsan yig na dkyus ltar 'dug pa dgra lha 'bar min nam dpyad.)*



13. 'Khon sGya chu ba Shākya 'bar  
 14. rJe btsun Sa skya pa chen po  
 15. Ne tse sBas ston  
 16. rTa stag so ba Rin cen don grub  
 17. Gan pa sTon dar  
 18. Gan pa So ston  
 19. Gan pa Chos rgyal  
 20. Gan pa Chos rin  
 21. Gan pa Rin rgyal (The Fifth Dalai Lama here remarks: "Though this name does not appear in Thartsepa's record of teachings, it does appear there in Khyentse's, so I think it was accidentally omitted from Thartsepa's": *thar rtse pa'i gsan yig tu mi 'dug kyang* (p. 193b) *mkhyen brtse'i der snang bas chad dam snyam*). The 'Thartsepa' referred to here is guru no. 30a, Thartse Panchen Namkha Palzang.  
 22. dPal ldan Bla ma Dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan  
 23. Chos rje dPal ldan tshul khriims  
 24. Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan  
 25. rDo rje 'chang Kun dga' bzang po  
 26. Chos rje Sangs rgyas dpal grub  
 27. mNga' ris pa Nam mkha' brtan pa  
 28. 'Jam dbyangs dKon cog lhun grub  
 29. Ngor Shar khang pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan  
 30a. E waṃ Thar rtse pa Nam mkha' dpal bzang and, a second in the same generation,  
 30b. Mus pa Nam mkha' dpal bzang  
 31. sGrub khang pa dPal ldan don grub (who received it from the previous two)  
 32. mGon po bSod nams mchog ldan  
 33. Za hor Bande (the Fifth Dalai Lama)  
 Alternatively, the lineage may continue from 25. Ngorchen:  
 26b. Khva char pa  
 27b. Kun mkhyen Seng ge'i mtshan can [bSod nams seng ge]  
 28b. Yongs 'dzin dKon cog 'phel  
 29b. Ngor chen Lha mchog seng ge  
 30c. rJe Sangs rgyas seng ge  
 [then, from the previous list] 30a. Thar rtse pa Nam mkha' dpal bzang, and after him the lineage continues the same as before.

<sup>265</sup> M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, p. 192.

<sup>266</sup> That this vestlike upper garment is a uniquely Tibetan garment has been noted already by J. Huntington 1990, p. 330, drawing important consequences about the painting's provenance from its presence.

<sup>267</sup> Ngor chen, Record of Teaching Received (*Thob*

*yig rgya mtsho*), p. 73c:

1. rDo rje 'chang
2. Ni gu ma
3. Khyung po rNal 'byor
4. rMog cog pa Rin chen brtson 'grus
5. dBon ston sKyer sgang ba Ye shes seng ge
6. Ri gong pa
7. gNyan ston Thog rdugs
8. Sangs rgyas ston pa
9. mKhas grub gZhon nu grub
10. Ba lung ba bSod grags
11. dPal ldan tshul khriims
12. Bla ma dam ba Buddhashri
13. Ngor chen

<sup>268</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol. 1, p. 209b:

1. rGyal ba rdo rje (p. 210a) 'chang
2. Ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma
3. Grub chen Sha wa ri'i dbang phyug
4. rJe btsun Mai tri pa chen po
5. Shangs pa Lo tsā ba Khyung po rNal 'byor
6. rMog lcog pa Rin chen brtson 'grus
7. sKyer sgang pa Chos kyi seng ge
8. gNyan ston sBas pa'i rnal 'byor
9. Chos rje Sangs rgyas ston pa
10. mKhas grub Shangs ston chen po
11. Mus chen rGyal mtshan dpal bzang
12. Sngags 'chang rDo rje gzhon nu
13. mNyam med Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor
14. mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang
15. mTshungs med bZang po rgyal mtshan
16. Grub chen Ngag dbang blo gros
17. Mar ston Tshul khriims rin chen
18. rDo rje 'chang sNgags ram pa dGe 'dun bkra shis
19. Thams cad mkhyen pa bSod nams rgya mtsho (the Third Dalai Lama)
20. Brag dgon sPyan snga gZhon nu chos dpal bzang po
21. rDo rje 'chang Pha bong kha pa dPal 'byor lhun grub
22. Rigs kun bdag po Chos dbyings rang grol
23. Za hor Bande (the Fifth Dalai Lama)

<sup>269</sup> M. Rhie 2004, in R. Linrothe and J. Watt eds. 2004.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., p. 96, footnote 25.

<sup>271</sup> On the iconography of these buddhas, see M. Willson and M. Brauen 2000, nos. 40–48. The two bodhisattva attendants of the Medicine Buddha are numbers 40 and 42, Candrarocana (Zla ltar snang byed, white in color) and Sūryarocana (Nyi ltar snang byed, yellow in color).

<sup>272</sup> These same deities are portrayed in an earlier thangka in P. Pal 2003, no. 125.

<sup>273</sup> See bSod nams rgya mtsho and M. Tachikawa 1989, no. 3. Loter Wangpo's records of teachings received for that collection, p. 17, records that the fifty-one deities of this mandala were actually counted as forty-seven in all in the tradition of this Medicine Buddha mandala (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs kyi gtso bo bder gshegs sman lha mched brgyad lha zhe bdun ma*), and that he used the liturgy of 'Khon ston bSod nams dpal 'byor lhun grub for conferring its initiation. (Were the outer four great kings not counted?) This teaching was based on the sutra called in Tibetan *mDo brgyad brgya pa* taught by Buddha Śākyamuni, as expounded by the Indian Acarya Kamalaśīla. The identity of each deity could be traced using the mandala liturgy.

<sup>274</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol. 1, pp. 50b–51a.

<sup>275</sup> F. Ricca 1997.

<sup>276</sup> F. Ricca 1997, p. 202 and his figure 237.

<sup>277</sup> Cf. the clouds behind two minor figures in Figures 8.8 and 8.18.

<sup>278</sup> F. Ricca 1997, p. 200.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., p. 198f.

<sup>280</sup> G. Tucci 1949, vol. 1, pp. 206–7 and 208.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 206–7. See also R. Vitali in V. Chan 1994, p. 418, who describes a still earlier Gyantse style by 1390–97 in the Gyantse Castle as "an early local style—feasibly executed by Tibetan artists—fully developed in Tsang."

<sup>282</sup> F. Ricca 1997, p. 198.

<sup>283</sup> E. Lo Bue and F. Ricca 1990, pp. 27 and 32.

<sup>284</sup> Kong sprul, *Shes bya kun khyab*, part 1, p. 36. The Thirteenth Karma pa Dūdül Dorje (bDud 'dul rdo rje) likewise did not consider a Tibetan manner (*bod ris*) to have begun until then. See E. Gene Smith 1970, p. 43, n. 73.

<sup>285</sup> See also D. Jackson 1990, p. 139f.

<sup>286</sup> M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991, p. 223.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. D. Jackson 1996, fig. 29 and pl. 3.

<sup>288</sup> Ramesh K. Dhungel 2002, has published the inscriptions of the Jamchen (Byams chen) Temple in his appendix, document number 13, p. 239ff., and a traditional history of the temple by Ngawang Phuntshok as document 16.

<sup>289</sup> This sequence of events is clearly related in the recent historical compilation *Glo bo sMon thang Chos sde mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin* 2001, p. 99–104. bKra shis bstan 'dzin, however, wrongly dates these events one

- sixty-year cycle too early, to the sixth calendrical cycle. R. Vitali 1999, p. 3, says a traditional history (*dkar chag*) of this temple dates its foundation to 1448, but thus must refer to its completion.
- <sup>290</sup> K. Dowman 1997, p. 189.
- <sup>291</sup> *Blo bo chos rgyal rim byon rgyal rabs mu thi li'i 'phreng mdzes* (fols. 64, no pagination marked), fol. 20a–21a.
- <sup>292</sup> G. Tucci 1977, p. 62, reporting on his very brief visit in October, 1952, also was confused about the structure of the temple, saying: “It used to be two storeys high, but the upper storey is completely ruined and ominous cracks are splitting the walls of the big lower chapel, too.”
- <sup>293</sup> Introduction by Roberto Vitali to *Earth Door Sky Door, Paintings of Mustang* by Robert Powell. The book was a catalog for the exhibition: *Paintings of Mustang* by Robert Powell, at the Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, January 31–September 26, 1999.
- <sup>294</sup> Robert Powell and Roberto Vitali, after studying the Maitreya Temple from different approaches, concluded it must have undergone significant changes. But neither knew what the original iconographic plan of the murals was meant to be.
- <sup>295</sup> *Blo bo chos rgyal rim byon rgyal rabs mu thi li'i 'phreng mdzes* (fols. 64, no pagination marked), fol. 20a–21a: *byams pa chen po gtso 'khor khri rgyab dang bcas g'zhan las khyad par du 'phags pa' rdo rje 'chang khri rgyab dang bcas pa' ldem gnyis sogs zangs gser las grub pa' bde bgye gsang gsum gyi bla brgyud zangs gser las grub pa' bzo khyad [20b] phul du phyin pa gsang sngags bla med kyi logs ris yongs su rdzogs pa dang bcas pa'i gtsug lag khang/*
- kun rig gi blos slangs rgya shin tu che ba' rin po che gser gyi ga ra su grub pa' logs ris la rnal 'byor rgyud kyi dkyil 'khor bzo khyad sogs g'zhan gyi blo yul las 'das pa'i gtsug lag khang/*
- byams chen zhal ras lha khang na logs ris rnal 'byor rgyud dkyil 'khor yongs su rdzogs pa'*
- dbu rtse'i na gsung ngag rin po che bla ma brgyud pa'i 'bur du 'dod pa' logs ris la rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud sde'i bskor ba' chos skyong gi sku 'bur du dod pa dang bcas pa bzugs te/ mdor na g'zhi'i gtsug lag khang gi logs ris la mdo'i lha/ bskor khang la bya spyod kyi lha/ zhal ras lha khang la [21a] rnal 'byor rgyud/ dbu rtse na bla med/ rdo rje 'chang/ g'zhal yas khang na rnal 'byor rgyud bla med de/ mdo dang rgyud sde'i lha tshogs rnam go rim dang mthun par bzugs/.*
- <sup>296</sup> Cf. also R. Vitali 1999, p. 23, note 15. But Vitali (p. 24, note 16) correctly documents that the main images of the temple were thoroughly rebuilt much later, in 1663, as documented in a long inscription.
- <sup>297</sup> R. Vitali 1999, p. 3 et passim, uses in this article the idiosyncratic spelling Glo sMos thang for the better attested form Glo bo sMon thang, explaining in footnote 2 that the first spelling occurs in the earliest of his sources. If the earliest obscure spellings of proper nouns are to be preferred, then why not do it consistently, favoring Ra sa over Lhasa, etc.? Vitali does not apply this principle consistently, deciding just three footnotes later (note 5) against using the earlier and historically more accurate original name of the important fifteenth-century king A ma dpal, since ‘A me dpal’ is the one still commonly known in Mustang.
- <sup>298</sup> Ibid., p. 26, note 22. K. Dowman 1997, p. 299, note 3, gives Devānanda as the Sanskrit equivalent of Lha dga’.
- <sup>299</sup> K. Dowman 1997, p. 190.
- <sup>300</sup> Philip Lieberman, Lama Ngawang Jorden, and Marcia R. Lieberman 2003 document the murals of the Great Maitreya Temple and the other two main Mustang mural sites in a DVD of photographs published by Brown University.
- <sup>301</sup> See K. Dowman 1997, figs. 221 and 222; P. Lieberman et al. 2003, west wall, south end, mandala 1, JG 16wsi.
- <sup>302</sup> G. Tucci 1977, p. 62, wrongly called it the great temple of Thug chen (Thugs rje chen po).
- <sup>303</sup> Glo bo sMon thang Chos sde mKhan po bKra shis bstan ‘dzin 2001, p. 110. The late abbot of Mönthang Chöde (bKra shis bstan ‘dzin), however, wrongly converts the date sixty years too early to 1407, though he correctly specifies the sixty-year calendrical cycle as the seventh. The old royal genealogy of the Lo rulers (fols. 30b–31b) confirms that King Tashi Göñ, son of Amgön Zangpo, was the main patron who supported the building and decoration of the Great Buddha Temple.
- <sup>304</sup> Ramesh K. Dhungel 2002, has published the inscriptions of the Thub chen Temple in his appendix, document number 15, p. 248ff., and a brief history of the temple as document 14.
- <sup>305</sup> A cross section of the Great Buddha temple was published by Robert Powell 2001, p. 35, fig. 9.
- <sup>306</sup> Introduction by Roberto Vitali to Robert Powell 1999, *Earth Door Sky Door, Paintings of Mustang*.
- <sup>307</sup> Intrigued by this forest of columns, Robert Powell painted a work in which they are depicted as the pillars of space (see Robert Powell 2001, painting 40).
- <sup>308</sup> Philip Lieberman, Lama Ngawang Jorden and Marcia R. Lieberman 2003 document the paintings in the Great Buddha Temple and the other two main Mustang mural sites in a DVD of photographs published by Brown University.
- <sup>309</sup> G. Tucci 1977, p. 62.
- <sup>310</sup> G. Tucci 1949, p. 347ff.
- <sup>311</sup> G. Tucci 1989, p. 10, which was the later English translation.
- <sup>312</sup> G. Tucci 1949, p. 347ff.
- <sup>313</sup> Heather Stoddard 1996 evidently followed them when she classified Tibetan painting styles from about 1000 to 1400 into four major styles, with her fourth being a “Kashmiri style (formerly the “Gu ge School”) in western Tibet,” eleventh through seventeenth century. She also, p. 39, mentions a “rather naive version” of the Indian (i.e., Pāla) style, for instance, in two temples of Alchi in Ladakh in western Tibet.
- <sup>314</sup> J. Huntington 1972, “Gu-ge bris: a stylistic amalgam,” in P. Pal ed., *Aspects of Indian Art* (Leiden: Brill), pp. 105–117.
- <sup>315</sup> J. Huntington 2001, p. 385.
- <sup>316</sup> P. Pal 1984, p. 102.
- <sup>317</sup> Ibid., p. 103.
- <sup>318</sup> Ibid., p. 102.
- <sup>319</sup> Cf. M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, p. 280.
- <sup>320</sup> Ibid., p. 280, no. 83.
- <sup>321</sup> M. Rhie 1999, p. 280.
- <sup>322</sup> Ngorchen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 69.4.2: *lam zab bla ma'i rnal 'byor gyi byin rlabs man ngag dang bcas pa'i brgyud pa ni/*
1. rDo rje ‘chang
  2. bDag med ma
  3. Birwa pa
  4. Bla ma Sa skya pa chen po
  5. [Slob dpon Rin po che, missing]
  6. rJe btsun Rin po che
  7. Chos rje Sa skya Pañdi ta
  8. Tshogs sgom Rin po che
  9. Chos rje Nyan chen pa
  10. Chos rje Brag phug pa
  11. Bla ma Blo gros brtan pa
  12. Bla ma dPal ldan tshul khirms
  13. Buddhashrī
  14. Ngorchen
- <sup>323</sup> See the branched lineage of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art thangka as charted in D. Jackson 2003, p. 109, and D. Jackson 1990, p. 131.
- <sup>324</sup> Ngor chen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 50.2.1: *bde mchog lo i pa brgyud pa'i bka' babs bdun dang ldan pa'i dbang rgyas pa thob pa la/ sa lugs kyi brgyud pa:*
1. rDo rje ‘chang
  2. Phyag na rdo rje
  3. Sar ha ba
  4. Klu sgrub
  5. Sha ba ri pa
  6. Lo i pa



7. Dha ri ka pa
  8. rDo rje dril bu pa
  9. Rus sbal zhabs
  10. Shrī dza landha ra
  11. Nag po spyod pa
  12. Gu hya pa
  13. rNam rgyal zhabs
  14. Tai lo pa
  15. Nā ro pa
  16. and 17. Pham mthing ba sku mched
  18. Klog skya Shes rab brtsegs
  19. Mal Lotstsha ba Blo gros grags
  20. Sa chen pa
  21. Slob dpon Rin po che
  22. [rJe btsun Rin po che]
  23. Chos rje Sa skya Paṇḍi ta
  24. bSod nams seng ge
  25. Sangs rgyas ‘bum
  26. Lotstsha ba mChog ldan
  27. Bla ma dPal ldan seng ge
  28. Bu ston pa
  29. mKhas grub gZhon nu bsod nams
  30. Chos rje Ye shes rgyal mtshan
  31. Ngor chen
- <sup>325</sup> C. Luczanits 2003, p. 43f.
- <sup>326</sup> This dating was also asserted by M. Rhie 1996, p. 440.
- <sup>327</sup> On the contact between Ngorchen and the Guge king in 1436, and his making a calculation of the age of Buddhism at the time, see J. Kramer 2008, p. 148f., which presents the relevant passage from Lowo Khenchen’s autobiography.
- <sup>328</sup> See E. Hein and Guenther Boelmann 1994, p. 134. Cf. the more complete photograph of the same mural in M. Rhie 1991, p. 57, fig. 23, photograph by E. Bernbaum, 1988.
- <sup>329</sup> Cf. M. Rhie 1991, p. 57, fig. 23, a detail of a wall painting of the White Temple (Lha khang dkar po) of Tholing, Guge. A smaller area of the same mural is published by E. Hein and Günther Boelmann 1994, p. 134.
- <sup>330</sup> Compare, for example, E. Hein and Günther Boelmann 1994, p. 115f.
- <sup>331</sup> P. Pal 2003, no. 103.
- <sup>332</sup> H. Stoddard 1996, p. 43f.
- <sup>333</sup> In the opinion of C. Luczanits 2002, the Pāla style started to penetrate western Tibet by the mid-twelfth century.
- <sup>334</sup> On the Red Temple (*mchod khang dmar po*) of Tsaparang, see R. Vitali 1996, p. 528, who

dated the temple to the last quarter of the fifteenth century, assigning it to the patronage of Don grub ma, the consort of the King Blo bzang rab brtan. See also P. Pal 1998, p. 53, who refers to the possible western-Tibetan stylistic background of the red-hatted Tsongkhapa, his plate 26.

- <sup>335</sup> The painting has been previously discussed in detail by G. Tucci 1949, pp. 392–399, who presents its inscriptions in transcription and translation.
- <sup>336</sup> R. Vitali 2001, p. 94f., discusses this visionary thangka. He calls its painter “sPrul sku ‘Phrang kha ba,” wondering whether he came from Guge and not realizing that he was the famous central-Tibetan artist ‘Phreng kha ba alias Ri mkhar ba dPal ldan blo gros bzang po, on whom see D. Jackson 1996, p. 181f. A. Heller 1992, p. 486f., too, described how Sönam Gyatsho instructed artists to depict his visions of deities in paintings.
- <sup>337</sup> On the patronage of the White Temple (mChod khang dkar po) and ‘Jigs byed Lha khang of Tsaparang, see R. Vitali 1996, p. 528, note 901. At Tsaparang the temples are traditionally called *mchod khang* (“house of worship”) and not *lha khang* (“temple of holy images”).
- <sup>338</sup> R. Vitali 2001, p. 95. Vitali mentions two western-Tibetan styles that were current in Guge in the sixteenth century, one at Tsarang (in the mChod khang dmar po) and a second slightly different one found at mDa’ pa bKra shis lhun po in Lho stod District of Guge.
- <sup>339</sup> G. Essen and T. Thingo 1989, vol. 2, no. 387, give the inscriptions. I have reordered the numbers in accord with their chronological sequence.
- <sup>340</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol. 1, p. 209b.
- <sup>341</sup> G. Tucci 1949, p. 346, re: thangka no. 10.
- <sup>342</sup> Tsong kha pa, *gSan yig*, p. 25a. I quoted here from the Asian Classics Input Project (ACIP) text file number S5267m.act.
- <sup>343</sup> According to the Fifth Dalai Lama, two generations occur in the place of 7) Seng ge bzang po: 22) rGyal sras Seng ge bzang po and 23) sLob dpon rGyal sras bzang po.
- <sup>344</sup> Tsong kha pa, *gSan yig* (ACIP text no. S5267m.act), p. 25a.
- <sup>345</sup> Tsong kha pa, *ibid.* records this lineage for the seminal *Lamp of the Path* treatise by Atiśa, which is the essence of the later Kadampa Stages of the Path teachings:
1. Jo bo rje (Atiśa)
  2. sTon pa [‘Brom ston]
  3. Po to ba
  4. Sha ra ba
  5. Bya ‘Chad kha ba (Ye shes rdo rje)
  6. Se sPyil bu ba (Chos kyi rgyal mtshan)
  7. Lha chen po

8. Lha ‘Gro mgon
9. Zangs chen ba Dar ma bsod nams
10. mTsho sna ba Shes rab bzang po
11. sLob dpon dGa’ ba bzang po [p. 26a]
12. mKhan chen Chos skyabs bzang pa
13. Tsongkhapa

- <sup>346</sup> G. Tucci 1949, p. 346.
- <sup>347</sup> For generation 21b, “Ye shes rgyal po,” the Fifth Dalai lama lists two gurus: 22) rGyal sras Seng ge bzang po, and 23) sLob dpon rGyal sras bzang po.
- <sup>348</sup> Tsong kha pa, *gSan yig*, p. 26a. I quote again from ACIP file no. S5267m.act. Tsongkhapa adds here that this is also his lineage for the bodhisattva vows in the Yogācāra tradition.
- <sup>349</sup> G. Tucci 1949, p. 346.
- <sup>350</sup> Fifth Dalai Lama, *Record of Teachings Received*, vol. 1, p. 38b.
- <sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 39a.
- <sup>352</sup> The main oversimplification of the painting’s contents was not iconographic but historical: the overlooking of Tsongkhapa’s main teacher, Rendawa, who was his chief guru of both Mahayana doctrine and tantric practice. For instance, that guru appears only three times in the surviving fragmentary *Record of Teachings* received of Tsongkhapa. A better idea of Rendawa’s true role can be gained from the recent study in C. Roloff 2009.
- <sup>353</sup> Their collection of mind-training instructions is now the most widely recognized collection of its kind. See Thupten Jinpa transl. and ed. 2006, p. 15.
- <sup>354</sup> D. Snellgrove and H. Richardson 1980, p. 154.

## CHAPTER 8

- <sup>355</sup> The other main suborders were the Gongkarwa in Ü Province (Gongkar Dorjeden Monastery was founded in 1464), which followed the Path with the Fruit tradition of Thekchen Chöje, and the shorter-lived Serdokjenpa tradition of Shakya Chokden (who was one of Ngorchen’s disciples for tantric teachings) based at Serdokjen (gSer mdog can) Monastery in central Tsang.
- <sup>356</sup> M. Kapstein 2006, p. 234.
- <sup>357</sup> I am not sure what his position of “great attendant” entailed, but my working hypothesis is that it included administrative duties over a part of Sakya, either its great assembly (*tshogs chen*) or another part. Jörg Heimbel has pointed out to me that the meaning of Sa skya tshogs in Ngorchen’s biography is unclear, referring me to A. Ferrari 1958, p. 1050f., note 501: “[...] His [‘Gro mgon ‘Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan’s] chair (*chos khri*) is still preserved in a great stone-garden (*rdo ‘tshal*) now called Sa skya tshogs, to the south-east of the bZhi thog,” and also J. Schoening 1990, p. 35, Map 10 and p. 47, note 14: “The Chos khri

- thang was later known as the Sa skya Tshogs,” which is represented in Map 10 (Geshe Thukche Wangchuk). According to Mr. Heimbels, the venerable Luding Khenchen was also unsure what the word refers to here.
- <sup>358</sup> Laychen Shönnu Sengge (Las chen gZhon nu seng ge) is referred to as “younger brother of Vajradhara” (*rdo rje ‘chang gi gcung*) in a biography of Shākya Chokden. I assume he was a younger son of Druppa Yönten. He attained the high rank of *Las chen* at Sakya Monastery and wrote an authoritative commentary on Sakya Pandita’s treatise *Discriminating the Three Vows*. Ngorchén in his monastic rule or constitution of Namgyal Monastery in Lo recommended this commentary for monks of that monastery to study. See D. Jackson 1983, “Commentaries on the Writings of Sa skya Pandita: A Bibliographical Sketch,” *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 8-3, p. 15.
- <sup>359</sup> Khenpo Appéy et al. 1987, p. 37.
- <sup>360</sup> Within a decade, the great Rongtön would found in Ü Province a new Sakya monastery as a center of mainly non-tantric scholastic studies in 1436. From there, Rongtön gave Ngorchén strong moral support, sending some of his most outstanding students to Ngor for tantric studies.
- <sup>361</sup> On Rendawa and his historical roles, see C. Roloff 2009.
- <sup>362</sup> The Tibetan reads: *rje btsun rdo rje ‘chang chen po kun dga’ bzang po la phyag ‘tshal lol*/. The Sanskrit inscription on the pedestal of the throne is also said to express the same homage to the great Vajradhara Kunga Zangpo.
- <sup>363</sup> When Ngorchén is depicted without a pundit’s hat, he is sometimes shown with a small but prominent bald spot on the top of his head. On this basis I tentatively identified a lineage master in a thangka of the Los Angeles County Museum as Ngorchén. Cf. P. Pal 1983 painting P22, pl. 25, where the two figures are misidentified as “Śākyaśrī and the Lotsawa of Trophu.” Note that Indian masters were never depicted wearing the Tibetan lama vest. Another thangka from the same set (of the Indian lay pundit Gayadhara?) was published in *Schoettle Tibetica* (1968), no. 126. See also the similar bald depictions of Ngorchén in Detlef I. Lauf, *Verborgene Botschaft tibetischer Thangkass* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Auum Verlag, 1976), plates 25 and 26 (pp. 93 and 95), where Ngorchén is again depicted without an outer robe covering his feet and with a bald spot on his head. See also the head of the second figure in HAR 65008.
- <sup>364</sup> Ngorchén, *Record of Teachings Received*, p. 48.4.5, records one lineage for the bDag med ma initiation, though he received it from both Sharchén and Buddhashrī.
- <sup>365</sup> Ngor chen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 50.2.1: *bde mchog lo i pa brgyud pa’i bka’ babs bdun dang ldan pa’i dbang rgyas pa thob pa la/ sa lugs kyi brgyud pa*:
1. rDo rje ‘chang
  2. Phyag na rdo rje
  3. Sar ha ba
  4. Klu sgrub
  5. Sha ba ri pa
  6. Lo i pa
  7. Dha ri ka pa
  8. rDo rje dril bu pa
  9. Rus sbal zhabs
  10. Shrī dza landha ra
  11. Nag po spyod pa
  12. Gu hya pa
  13. rNam rgyal zhabs
  14. Tai lo pa
  15. Nā ro pa
  16. and 17. Pham mthing ba sku mched, two Newar brothers
  18. Klog skya Shes rab brtsegs
  19. Mal Lotstsha ba Blo gros grags
  20. Sa chen pa
  21. Slob dpon Rin po che
  22. [rJe btsun Rin po che]
  23. Chos rje Sa skya Paṇḍi ta
  24. bSod nams seng ge
  25. Sangs rgyas ‘bum
  26. Lotstsha ba mChog ldan
  27. Bla ma dPal ldan seng ge
  28. Bu ston pa
  29. mKhas grub gZhon nu bsod nams
  30. Chos rje Ye shes rgyal mtshan
  31. Ngor chen
- <sup>366</sup> His identity as Ngorchén was also asserted by M. Rhie 1999, p. 440.
- <sup>367</sup> The same iconography is given to the first of three main figures in HAR 945, who also apparently depicts Ngorchén, but here as one of three main lineal gurus.
- <sup>368</sup> See also D. Jackson 1996, p. 77f.
- <sup>369</sup> Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, p. 254.1 (fol. 60b): *de yang chos rje ye shes rgyal mtshan pa’i thugs dgongs rdzogs pa’i thabs su ‘du khang gi gt sang khang ‘og mar/ ston pa’i gser sku chen po ngo mtshar ba ‘gan rdo la dang bcas pa dang/*.
- <sup>370</sup> Ibid., p. 254.2 (fol. 60b): *grub chen buddha ba’i thugs dgongs rdzogs pa’i thabs su/ gsung ngag gi bla ma brgyud pa’i yongs su rdzogs pa’i bris sku chen mo bcu gcig dang/ gzhan yang gtsang khang steng ma da lta lam ‘bras lha khang du grags par/ rdo rje ‘chang gi gser sku khyad par du ‘phags pa dang/ bdag me ma nas grub chen buddha ba’i bar lder sku khyad par du ‘phags pa che ba rnams dang/ rdo rje ‘chang nas grub chen buddha ba’i bar du brgyud pa yongs su rdzogs pa’i lder sku chung ba rnams lam zab lha khang du bzugs pa dang/ bla ma rnams bzugs pa’i gtsang khang gi logs bris la/ kye rdo rje dang/ ‘khor lo bde mchog dang/ gsang ba ‘dus pa rnams kyi bla ma brgyud pa dang/ sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa’ dpag tu med pa bzhangs/*.
- <sup>371</sup> Könchok Palden was the twelfth abbot of Ngor. His two tenures were from 1569 to 1579 and from 1582/1583 to 1590.
- <sup>372</sup> Sharpa Champa Kunga Tashi was the fourteenth abbot of Ngor. His tenure was from 1595 to about 1603. A continuation of the colored set seems to have been commissioned by Drangti Panchen Namkha Palzang; see G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo (1989), vol. 2, p. 105, no. II-228, Könchok Lhündrup (dKon mchog lhun grub).
- <sup>373</sup> Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, p. 255.1 (61a): *grub chen buddha ba’i thugs dgongs rdzogs thabs lam ‘bras thang ka bcu gcig/ bla ma phyi ma’i kha skong dang bcas/ gsung ngag gi lam dbang skabs su/ rje dkon mchog dpal ldan pas bzhangs pa’i gser thang rnams dang res mos su ‘grems pa ‘di yin/ gser thang ‘phros rnams byams pa kun dga’ bkra shis kyi bzhangs par ‘dug/ bzugs sa sngar gyi gzim chung ka gnyis ma da lta lam zab lha khang du grags par bzhangs/ ‘di las gzhan du ‘khyer bcom byed na rdo rje chos skyong rnams kyiis tshar gcod kyi las mdzad par ‘gyur rol/*.
- <sup>374</sup> Ibid., p. 254.5 (60b): *chos rje ‘phags pa gzhan nu blo gros pa’i thugs dgongs rdzogs pa’i thabs su/ bal po’i lha bzo mkhas pa rnams kyiis bris pa’i rdo rje phreng ba’i dkyil ‘khor yongs su rdzogs pa/ kri ya sa [61a] mu tsstha nas bshad pa’i dge legs su byed pa’i dkyil ‘khor gsum dang bcas pa ‘di dang/*.
- <sup>375</sup> Ibid., pp. 255.4–257.2 (61a–62a).
- <sup>376</sup> The Tibetan: *Lam ‘bras bu dang bcas pa’i bla ma brgyud pa dang bcas pa rnams kyi bris yig*. The version I consulted was a manuscript from Mustang that survives in the Tōyō Bunko library, Tokyo, Tibetan *dbu can* manuscript number 44, vol. ka, fols. 136b–143b. On this work, see also Jowita Kramer 2008, p. 176, no. 85.
- <sup>377</sup> On the history and successive gurus of Path with the Fruit instructions, see also C. Stearns 2001 and C. Stearns 2006, pp. 129–284.
- <sup>378</sup> R. Linrothe ed. 2006, no. 49, p. 296.
- <sup>379</sup> R. Linrothe ed. 2006, p. 296.
- <sup>380</sup> See, for example, M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991, p. 227, number 73, where the inscription clearly mentions the dge slong Kunga Zangpo as the patron of the painting, with the dedicatory prayer: *dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang ‘phags pa’i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig/*. See further D. Jackson 1993, p. 122, where, however, the historical reference (note 7) should have been to the Kriyāsamuccaya (which Sazang Phakpa also transmitted to Ngorchén) and not to the Vajrāvalī. A second mandala from this set (also from the Zimmerman collection) appears in



- P. Pal 1991, p. 151, plate number 84, “Four mandalas.” The bottom inscription reads: *dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig//*. Here the painting is dated to the late fourteenth century, but probably the 1430s or 1440s are correct. An inscription on top identifies this as the seventh thangka in the series: *rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris bdun pa'o//*. Cf. P. Pal 1984, p. 210, n. 5. For another painting from this set, see G. Béguin 1990, p. 71, n. 32.
- <sup>381</sup> Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, p. 258.6 (fol. 62b): *e waṃ chos ldan gyi ri khrod du phebs pa'i tshel' rdo rje phreng ba'i dkyil 'khor yongs su rdzogs par bzhengs par dgongs pa nal bal po'i lha bzo ba wang gu li dpun* [fol. 63a] *la sogs pa mkhas pa drug yong ba'i gtam yang med par blo bur du sku mdun du sleb nas ji ltar dgongs pa'i dkyil 'khor rnam dangl gzhān yang thugs dam gyi rigs mtha' yas pa 'bad med du grub pa'i tshel' lha bzo ba a kher ra dza bya ba cig yod pa na re/ nged 'di rnam phan tshun gcig gis gcig gleng ba ma yin par/ thams cad bod du bla ma 'phags pa'i bu can du 'gro zhes phyogs gcig tu gros 'chams te bod du yong ba'i tshel' la stod shel dkar dang/ chu 'dus dang/ sa skya rnam su khyed rang rnam 'di tsho ru las dka' [=ka] byas na yon rdzongs legs po ster zer yang/ nge[d] tsho gang du'ang sdod ma 'dod cingl gnas po mi nyag gcig yod pa na re/ khyed rang an tsha khar phyin nas las dka' [=ka] byas na yon rdzongs thams cad gser du yod pas 'gro na ngas skyel zer yang 'gro ma 'dod par/ bla ma'i drung du zangs sleb pa 'di/ bla mas sgom byas pa nged kyi snying la phog pa yin mod zer te chos skyong gis rang dbang med par bkug pa yin no/*. On the remarkable happenings at the completion of the Path with the Fruit lineage statues, see *ibid.*, p. 261 (fol. 64a).
- <sup>382</sup> The Tibetan: *byang phug pa bla ma kun dga' legs pa'i thugs dam la bzhengs pa yin lags swo*.
- <sup>383</sup> I have drawn these examples mainly from the Rubin Museum of Art and the Shelley and Donald Rubin private collections.
- <sup>384</sup> It is also a distinct possibility here, too, that Ngorchon is depicted thrice, as also in Fig. 8.9.
- <sup>385</sup> Ngorchon, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 45.3: *paṇḍi ta chen po shākya shrī/ mkhas chen rdo rje dpal bal* [p. 45.4] *mkhan chen 'od zer dpal bal mkhan chen bsod nams dpal/ mkhan chen bkra shis tshul khriims/ chos rje ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po/ des bdag la'o/*.
- <sup>386</sup> I have briefly described this painting in D. Jackson 2003, p. 109, and D. Jackson 1990, p. 131. The lineages of teachers of Fig. 8.11 is:
1. rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara)
  2. bDag med ma (Nairātmyā)
  3. Birwapa (Virūpa)
  4. Nag po pa (Kṛṣṇapāda)
  5. Ḍāmarupa [not Nāropa!]
  6. Avaduti pa
  7. Gayadhara
  8. Bla chen ['Broḡ mi] (992–1072?)
  9. Se ston [Kun rig]
  10. Zhang ston [Chos 'bar]
  11. [Sa chen Kun dga' snying po] (1092–1158)
  12. bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182)
  13. rJe btsun [Grag pa rgyal mtshan] (1147–1216)
  14. Sa paṇ (1182–1251)
  - 15a. Tsho[gs] bsgom [Kun dga' dpal]
  - 15b. 'Phags pa (1235–1280)
  - 16a. [Nyan] chen pa [bSod nams brtan pa]
  - 16b. Zhang dKon [mchog] dpal (b. 1240)
  - 17a. dKar po brag pa [Rin chen seng ge]
  - 17b. Brag phug pa [bSod nams dpal] (1277–1350)
  - 18a. Ri khrod pa [Blo gros brtan pa] (1316–1358)
  - 18b. Bla ma dam pa [bSod nams rgyal mtshan] (1312–1375)
  19. dPal ldan tshul khriims (1333–1399)
  20. Buddhashrī (1339–1419)
  - 21a. [Ngor chen!] (1382–1456)
  - 21b. [Ngor chen] Kun dga' bzang po [!]
  - 22a) Mus chen [dKon mchog rgyal mtshan] (1388–1469)
  - 22b. Mus pa Chen po [!]
  23. 'Jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho (1396?–1474)
  24. rJe btsun Dam pa Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478)
  25. dPal ldan rdo rje (1411–1482)
  26. Bla ma bSod nams dbang phyug
  27. rJe btsun Dam pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489)
- <sup>387</sup> P. Pal 1983, P13 (plate 18). The painting had been exhibited in Paris at the Grand Palais as part of the major exhibition organized by Béguin in 1977: *Dieux et demons de l'Himalaya, Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque*.
- <sup>388</sup> M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991, p. 220.
- <sup>389</sup> Compare his appearance in the Path with the Fruit lineages in M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, no. 189 (Ru 352), p. 468f.
- <sup>390</sup> Cf. M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, p. 291.
- <sup>391</sup> Compare below the hat of the main figure in Figure 8.24. For another adaptation of the Sakya pundit hat, see HAR 723, whose main figure is said to be Chögyal Phakpa. Here the ear flaps cross on the top of the head, making an X.
- <sup>392</sup> The Tibetan: *yi dam dkyil ['khor] gyi lha tshogs 'di dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa lha mchog seng ge'i yi dam du bzhengs/ mangga lam/*.
- <sup>393</sup> In Tibetan the back inscriptions read: *'jigs byed*, and, in a different hand: *ma dag gda'*.
- <sup>394</sup> The inscription below in Tibetan: *rje btsun bla ma dam pa dkon mchog 'phel sku tshē brtan pa'i phyir du rig pa 'dzin pa lha mchog seng ges gzhengs/*.
- <sup>395</sup> Leidy and R. Thurman 1997, p. 92.
- <sup>396</sup> One impressive commission from this period that comes to mind is a golden thangka with three main figures in the collection of Dr. Pesl near Munich, Germany.
- <sup>397</sup> The painting is said in the HAR website, item 96, to be from the “Sakya Palace Painting School,” perhaps on the basis of oral tradition.
- <sup>398</sup> The partly effaced Tibetan inscription at the bottom is difficult to read in places and also written by someone whose spelling was defective. What I could make of it so far is: *'kham sum [=kham ssum] chos kyi rgyal po 'dren mchog sangs rgyas gsungs dge [=seng ge] long [=la?] dge slongs? chos skyong lhun grub phyag 'tshal zhing kyabs [=skyabs] su gsol [=chi'o?] kye [=skye] ba dang tshē rabs thams cad du rjes su gzung du gsol/ manglam/ tra [=bkra] shis par shog/*.
- <sup>399</sup> The front inscription runs: *phun tshogs gsum gyi 'dren mchog chos kyi rje// kun khyab dus gsum sangs rgyas kun gyi dngos// mkha' khyab kham ssum 'gro ba'i phrin las can// zab rgyas theg gsum smra ba'i seng ger 'dud// bde mchog mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i bla ma brgyud pa la sogs pa'i lha tshogs rnam la phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o// dus thams cad du rjes su bzung du gsol/ shu bham//*
- <sup>400</sup> The set includes the painting of Sönam Tsemo in Los Angeles and several in Leiden and elsewhere; see P. Pal 1983, p. 153.
- <sup>401</sup> Rongtön at Nalendra, moreover, had his own special traditions of Path with the Fruit practice transmitted not by Ngorchon but by Thekchen Chöje.
- <sup>402</sup> See M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, fig. 86.1, for a detail of the thangka.
- <sup>403</sup> Loter Wangpo in his *rGyud sde kun btus thob yig*, p. 136f., records this lineage:
1. Chos sku rDo rje 'chang
  2. rGyal yum rDo rje rnal 'byor ma
  3. 'Phags pa sPyan ras gzigs
  4. Byang sems Blo gros rin chen
  5. Grub chen Sha ba rī dbang phyug
  6. mNga' bdag Mai tri gupta
  7. rGya gar Phyag na rdo rje
  8. sLob dpon Ka ma la badzra
  9. Paṇḍi ta Dza ya se na
  10. Sum pa Lo tsā ba Dar ma yon tan

11. rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan	9. sNa tshogs gzugs	bKra shis rin chen
12. Sa paṇ Kun dga' rgyal mtshan	10. Lha dbang [Lha'i dbang ldan]	Ngor chen
13. Bla ma sKyob pa dpal bzang po	11. 'Jam dbyangs grags pa	<sup>411</sup> On the Phakpa Wati statue of Kyirong, see Franz-Karl Ehrhard 2004, <i>Die Statue und der Tempel des Ārya Va-ti bzang-po: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Geographie des tibetischen Buddhismus</i> (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag).
14. rGyal tsha lung mang po Chos kyi dbang phyug	12. Pad dkar [Padma dkar po]	<sup>412</sup> See further references to thangkas from the same set in M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, no. 85.
15. Mang mkhar Lo tsā ba mChog ldan legs blo	13. 'Jam dbyangs sPrul pa	<sup>413</sup> The deities are:
16. Bag ston gZhon nu tshul khirms of Narthang	14. Tsi lu Paṇḍi ta [Tsi lu Ātsārya]	d1. [Mahāmāyā, sGyu ma chen po]
17. Tshul khirms rgyal mtshan of Narthang	15. Paṇḍi ta Ātsārya [Pi to Ātsārya]	d2. Wa ti bzang po
18. Bla ma Ngag dbang grags pa	16. Dus 'khor zhabs Che	d3. 'Jam ma la
19. Bla ma Byang chub seng ge	17. Dus 'khor zhabs Chung	d4. mu stegs lha gnon [Virūpa suppressing the non-Buddhist deity]
20. Sa bzang 'Phags pa gzhon nu blo gros	18. Mañjukīrti	The lineal gurus are:
21. Ngor chen rDo rje 'chang Kun dga' bzang po	19. Samanta shrī	1. Shākya thub pa [Śākyamuni]
22. Gung ru Shes rab bzang po	20. Ro Chos rab [=Rwa Lo tsā ba Chos rab]	2. Sha ri bu [Śāriputra]
23. Kun mkhyen [Go bo] Rab 'byams pa Sönam Sengge who received it from the previous two	21. [Rwa] Ye shes seng ge	3. sGra gcan 'dzin
24. Byas 'gyur ba Sönam Sengge	22. [Rwa] 'Bum seng	4. Bram ze sGra can 'dzin
25. mKhan chen dKon mchog tshul khirms	23. dGa lo [rJe btsun rGwa lo]	5. Klu sgrub
26. sGo rum pa Kun dga' legs pa'i blo gros	24. Shes rab seng ge [Rong pa Shes rab seng ge]	6. Ghu na mi ta [Guṇamita]
27. 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug.	25. dPal ldan seng ge	7. Rin chen she snyan [=Rin chen bshes gnyen]
<sup>404</sup> For another possible example of such a transmission for Acala—through Sumpa Lotsawa and not Sachen and Sönam Tsemo—shown in a thangka, see S. Kossak and J. Singer 1998, no. 22, Acala, dating to about 1300, if the lineage ends two generations after Sapan.	26. rDo rje rgyal mtshan [Shong Lo tsā ba?]	8. Chos kyi bzang po
<sup>405</sup> Another painting from the set was wrongly dated a century too early thanks to a wrong identification of the guru or the patron. See P. Pal 1997, no. 74, p. 149.	27. Zhwa lu Bu ston	9. Guṇa pa ti [?]
<sup>406</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 161, and p. 168, note 351.	28. Thugs sras Lo tsā ba	10. Chos kyi phreng ba
<sup>407</sup> Inscription, top left: <i>dus 'khor dbang gi brgyud pa</i> . Inscription, top center: <i>phreng ba'i ras bris bcu gcig pa'o</i> /. Inscription, bottom center: <i>rdo rje 'chang sangs rgyas seng ge'i dgongs pa rdzogs phyir dul grang</i> [sic] <i>btsun nam mkha' dpal bzangs gis dgo</i> [sic] <i>gsum gus pa chen pos bzhangs sol</i> /.	29. Shar pa Ye shes rgya mtsho	11. Shākya shrī
<sup>408</sup> The lineage gurus, according to their inscriptions are:	30. mKhyen rab rje [mKhyen rab chos rje]	12. rDo rje dpal
1. rDo rje 'chang	31. bSod nams mchog grub	13. 'Byung gnas sbas pa
2. Dus 'khor	32. bKra shis rgyal mtshan	14. mKhan chen 'Od zer dpal
3. Shākya thub pa	33. Paṇḍi ta Gā ga na shrī bhadrā [Paṇḍi ta Nam mkha' dpal bzang]	15. mKhan chen bSod nams dpal
4. Zla ba bzang po	<sup>409</sup> See Ngorchen, <i>Thob yig rgya mtsho</i> , p. 53.4.2:	16. mKhan chen bKra shis tshul khirms
5. Lha dbang	Rwa lo tstsha ba Chos rab	17. Ye shes rgyal mtshan
6. brJid byi mo [=gZi brjid can]	Rwa Ye shes seng ge	18. Kun dga' bzang po
7. Zla byin [Zla bas byin]	Rwa 'Bum seng	19. dKon mchog 'phel
8. Klu'i dbang phyug [Lha'i dbang phyug]	rJe btsun rGwa lo	20. Sanggye Rinchen (Müchen Sangs rgyas rin chen, circa 1453–1524, eighth abbot, tenure 1513–1516
	Bla ma Rong pa Shes rab seng ge	21. Lha mchok Seng ge (1468–1535), ninth abbot, tenure 1516–1534
	Bla ma Kyi ston 'Jam dbyangs grags rgyal	22. dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), tenth abbot, tenure 1534–1557
	Chos rje Kun mkhyen chen po [Dol po pa]	23. Sangs rgyas seng ge (1504–1569), eleventh abbot, tenure 1557–1569
	'Dren mchog Chos kyi rgyal po [Jo nang Phyogs las nam rgyal]	24. 'Bum phrag gsum pa, fl. mid-sixteenth century
	Chos rje Ye shes rgyal mtshan	25. Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566)
	Ngor chen	
	<sup>410</sup> See his <i>Thob yig rgya mtsho</i> , p. 104.3.5:	
	rJe btsun rGwa lo	
	Bla ma Shes rab seng ge	
	Bla ma dPal ldan seng ge	
	Bu ston thams cad mkhyen pa	
	Dus 'khor ba Chos kyi dpal	



26. [patron]

<sup>414</sup> Cf. HAR 368, which is painted in a similar style, but with ink inscriptions.

<sup>415</sup> The guru lineage as recorded in inscriptions is:

1. rDo rje 'chang
2. 'Jigs byed
3. Ye shes mkha' 'gro
4. La li ta [bazra]
5. A mo gha bha dra
6. [Ye shes 'byung gnas sbas pa (Jñānākara-gupta)]
7. Padmavajra
8. Mar med mdzad
9. [Rwa lo rDo rje grags]
10. Chos rab
11. Ra Ye shes seng ge
12. 'Bum seng
13. Ra [Klog skya] dBang phyug grags
14. Shes rab dpal
15. 'Phags pa Rin po che
16. Zhang ston
17. Brag phug pa
18. dPal ldan Bla ma dam pa
19. Byang chub dpal
20. Ye shes rgyal mtshan [Shar chen]
21. rDo rje 'chang [Ngor chen]
22. Paṇḍi ta Grags pa rgyal mtshan [Gu ge Paṇḍi ta]
23. mKhas [illegible] bsod nams
24. rJe Sangs rgyas rin chen [?]
25. Sa lo Thams cad mkhyen pa
26. rJe dKon mchog lhun grub
27. Sangs rgyas [seng ge?]
28. rJe dKon mchog dpal ldan
29. rJe Shar khang pa
30. rJe Nam mkha dpal bzang

<sup>416</sup> See Ngorchen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 48.3.1. The lineage is:

1. rDo rje 'Jigs byed (Vajrabhairava)
2. Ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma (\*Jñānāḍākīṇī)
3. Lalitavajra
4. Amoghavajra
5. Ye shes 'byung gnas sbas pa (Jñānākara-gupta)
6. Padmavajra

7. Dipamkararakṣita

8. Rwa Lo tstsha ba rDo rje grags

9. Rwa Chos rab

10. Rwa Ye shes seng ge

11. Rwa 'Bum seng

12. Klog skya dBang phyug grags

13. lDong ston Shes rab dpal

14. 'Gro mgon 'Phags pa

15. Zhang dKon mchog dpal (b. 1240)

16. Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277–1350)

17. Chos rje bSod nams rgyal mtshan dpal (1312–1375)

18. mKhan chen Byang chub dpal bzang po

19. Chos rje Ye shes rgyal mtshan

20. Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456)

One lineage then continues, as witnessed to by this painting:

21. Gu ge Paṇḍi ta Grags pa rgyal mtshan (d. 1486)

22. mKhas [illegible] bSod nams [If mKhas is wrong for mKhan, then this might be mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub, i.e., Glo bo mKhan chen, 1456–1532?]

24. rJe Sangs rgyas rin chen (1453?–1524), 8th abbot of Ngor

25. Sa skya Lo tsā ba, throne holder of Sakya.

26. dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), 10th abbot of Ngor

27. Sangs rgyas seng ge (1504–1569), 11th abbot of Ngor

28. dKon mchog dpal ldan (1526–1590), 12th abbot

29. rJe Shar khang pa [Shes rab rgyal mtshan?]

30. Brang ti Paṇ chen Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1535–1602), 13th abbot of Ngor

<sup>417</sup> The major deities with inscriptions: d1 (main figure, Vajrabhairava), d2 *gshing rje dgra nag*, and d3 *gshin rje gdong drug*.

<sup>418</sup> G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo 1989, vol. 2, p. 106, no. II-229.

<sup>419</sup> We should note that at least two thangkas are known to survive from this set, one of which allows it to be dated to the second half of the seventeenth century. Compare the thangka portraying Ngor Abbot Sönam Gyatsho with two lineages, 77 ¼ x 62 ¾ in. (196.2 x 159.3 cm), Newark Museum (accession number 79.65); literature: V. Reynolds et al. 1986, pl. 11 (P12). See also the Sachen from this set preserved in the Zimmerman collection (illustrated above as Figure 3.2).

<sup>420</sup> On Chöying Gyatso of Tsang and his career nearby, mainly at Tashilhunpo, see D. Jackson 1996, p. 219ff.

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